

# Music & Letters

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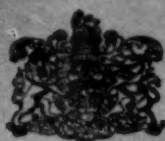
Vol. XXII No. 1

January 1941

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Some Forerunners of the Lully Opera . . . . .	Donald Jay Grout . . . . . 1
Text-Books on Orchestration before Berlioz . . . . .	Adam Carse . . . . . 26
Some Notes on a Bodleian Manuscript. With an Unpublished Contemporary Setting of Shakespeare . . . . .	George A. Thewlis . . . . . 32
Four Unknown Early Works by Beethoven. . . . .	Jack Werner . . . . . 36
Mozart and the Viola . . . . .	J. Arthur Watson . . . . . 41
When Ravel Composed to Order . . . . .	M. D. Calvocoressi . . . . . 54
Tovey's Teaching. With Three Letters from the late Sir Donald Tovey . . . . .	W. B. Wordsworth . . . . . 60
The Recorder or English Flute . . . . .	Carl F. Dolmetsch . . . . . 67
Isaac Nathan . . . . .	Edward Rimbault Dibdin . . . . . 75
Wagner's Influence on Hitler . . . . .	Robert L. Jacobs . . . . . 81
Reviews of Books . . . . .	. . . . . 84
Reviews of Music . . . . .	. . . . . 93

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	PAGE
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Text-Books on Orchestration before Berlioz . . . Adam Carse . . .	26
Some Notes on a Bodleian Manuscript. With an Un- published Contemporary Setting of Shakespeare	George A. Thewlis . . . 32
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When Ravel Composed to Order . . . M. D. Calvocoressi . . .	54
Tovey's Teaching. With Three Letters from the late Sir Donald Tovey	W. B. Wordsworth . . . 60
The Recorder or English Flute . . . Carl F. Dolmetsch . . .	67
Isaac Nathan . . . Edward Rimbault Dibdin . . .	75
Wagner's Influence on Hitler . . . Robert L. Jacobs . . .	81
Reviews of Books . . . . .	84
Reviews of Music . . . . .	93

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# *Music and Letters*

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## **SOME FORERUNNERS OF THE LULLY OPERA**

BY DONALD JAY GROUT

THE real beginning of French national opera dates from the first performance of Lully's 'Cadmus et Hermione' on April 27th 1673. From that time on Lully produced a new work regularly each year until his death in 1687. These pieces, perfectly consistent in form and style, established a certain type of opera which maintained itself in France essentially unaltered until the advent of Gluck nearly a hundred years later.

The outlines of the form are well known. There is always a prologue devoted chiefly to singing the praises of Louis XIV and often containing allusions to contemporary events. The opera is divided into five acts. The subjects are drawn from ancient mythology or medieval romance, and many of the settings are of a pastoral character. The action is developed by means of the recitative, which frequently merges into passages of a more regular melodic structure. Dialogues, duets and ensembles of various kinds are common. But the most spectacular feature of the opera, and the chief source of its popularity, is the presence of scenes which do not usually form a necessary part of the plot, and which therefore are known as *divertissements*, or "diversions". These "diversions" are introduced whenever the action offers the slightest pretext for them. They fill nearly half of the average Lully opera. They are of many kinds—pastoral assemblies, sacrificial scenes, battles, infernal scenes, descents of the gods, and so on—but with the common feature that all provide occasion on a grand scale for a full stage, rich costumes and scenery, the use of machines, choral singing, and dancing.

The creation of this kind of opera is the work of Lully. He was for fourteen years both its guiding genius and its absolute master. He not only wrote the music—and rewrote most of the librettos—but he controlled every detail of the production and management, being responsible only to the king. As Louis XIV said “l’état, c’est moi”, so might Lully have said with equal truth “l’opéra, c’est moi”.

But, like all creative artists, Lully built out of materials which he found already in existence. Indeed, one of the reasons for the immediate success of his operas was that they incorporated so many formulas which had proved their worth in previous attempts to combine music and drama on the French stage. The opera came into being as the culmination of a long line of experiments; it grew almost imperceptibly out of earlier forms: the French classical tragedy of Corneille and Racine, the Italian opera, the French *tragédie à machines*, the pastorale and the ballet. It is the purpose of this essay to show something of the nature and historical development of each of these forms in the seventeenth century, and to show what each contributed to the Lully opera.

#### 1. FRENCH OPERA AND CLASSICAL TRAGEDY

Unless we are willing to assume that the French public of the late seventeenth century was extraordinarily easy to please—a supposition hardly tenable—then we must admit that there is more to Lully’s operas than greets the musician’s ear. Any one who plays through the whole score of a Lully opera is likely to emerge from that experience (if he survives it at all) with a confused impression of page upon page of music void of imagination, pale in colour, thin in harmony, monotonous in invention, stereotyped in rhythm, limited in melody, barren of contrapuntal resource and so cut into little sections by perpetually recurring cadences that all sense of movement seems lost in a desert of clichés, relieved all too rarely by oases of real beauty. Of course the music is not really as bad as all that. Apart from the recitatives, there are many places of charm and even grandeur, as well as occasional passages of strong dramatic force. But if we compare it, simply as music, with what was being written by contemporaries in other countries—Buxtehude, Corelli and Provenzale, for example—we cannot help realizing that Lully’s musical gifts were scarcely of the first order. Must we then attribute his success in France merely to ignorance or to chauvinism? Hardly that, although both these factors were undoubtedly operative. The fact is that we are here confronted with the familiar paradox of opera, where the music is only one of



several elements in the work and where something may be very effective in an operatic scene which would be pointless and dull when heard outside its proper setting. The difference in purpose between dramatic music and concert music must always be remembered when dealing with opera, and it is especially necessary in the case of Lully, where the relative importance of the music in the whole scheme is much less than in the case of composers like A. Scarlatti, Mozart or Verdi. Indeed, precisely this matter of the greater part played by the drama and by the dance as compared with the music *per se* is one of the basic points of difference between French and Italian opera in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

To understand why this is the case we must realize that the social structure of France in the age of Louis XIV did not only (by virtue of its wealth and stability) make the existence of opera possible; it actually dictated the appearance of a certain kind of opera. It was a society based on the ideal of order, an order held to be discernible by reason and hence to be accepted willingly by reasoning men. The ideal had been developed in the philosophical writings of Descartes, whose doctrines were fundamental in the thought of the whole seventeenth century. The words attributed to Richelieu in the 'Testament politique':

Ainsi que le Succès qui a suivi les bonnes intentions qu'il a plu à Dieu me donner pour le Règlement de cet État, justifiera aux Siècles à venir la fermeté avec laquelle j'ai constamment poursuivi ce Dessein. . . .<sup>(1)</sup>

illustrate the extent to which this political genius accepted the Cartesian principles. The unity of France under the monarchy was a *dessein*, a plan, a kind of social blueprint which was self-evidently right and which ought therefore to be realized in practice. "Règlement" does not mean rule in the sense of "domination"; it means rather "setting in order" or "bringing to actuality that ideal of order which the reason clearly perceives to be true and proper". The same word, with the same meaning, is used by Menestrier in 1682: "C'est la gloire de la France d'avoir achevé de régler tous les beaux Arts".<sup>(2)</sup> The belief that the French had perceived and expressed the final "règlement" of all the fine arts in 1682 would be amusing in its presumption if one did not regard the statement as being merely a sincere and quite matter-of-fact observation, accepted as self-evident by most men of the time. Confidence in the ability to arrive at final standards for judging

<sup>(1)</sup> 'Testament politique du Cardinal de Richelieu', 4th Ed. (Amsterdam, Desbordes, 1681), I: 9.

<sup>(2)</sup> Menestrier, 'Des Ballets anciens et modernes' (Paris, Guignard, 1682), p. 5.

truth, goodness and beauty through the exercise of the reason was axiomatic in their thinking. Boileau's counsel for achieving perfection in poetry was summed up in his advice, "Aimez donc la raison". Conversely, the imagination was distrusted. Lecerf de la Viéville, Lully's principal biographer, wrote in 1704: "Rien n'est si dangereux, ni si vicieux, que de s'abandonner à son génie ; de laisser aller la vivacité d'une imagination échauffée aussi loin qu'elle veut . . ." <sup>(1)</sup>

Counsels like this when applied to the arts brought forth, as might be expected, works characterized by objectivity, repose, simplicity, massiveness and nobility of proportions, and by a clearness of outline which the frequent ornamentations were never allowed to obscure. These qualities may be observed in such diverse examples as the architecture of the Louvre, the gardens of Versailles, the tragedies of Racine and the operas of Lully. An opera in France had to be something different from what it was in contemporary Italy. The confused plots of the Italian works ; the overwhelming number of irrelevant details and secondary characters ; the implausibility of their dramatic situations ; the meaningless repetitions of the texts ; the florid embellishment of the vocal lines ; even the frequently chromatic and dissonant harmonies—all these things produced on the French an impression of intolerable artistic anarchy. Order and clarity were wanted. Where could a principle of order for so long a work as an opera be found ? The obvious answer was the same as that which had occurred to the first creators of opera in Florence, namely the drama. But instead of the imagined Greek theatre which the Florentines aspired to bring to life, Lully had a living model to which he could turn—the French classical drama, then in its Golden Age. And since it was felt that tragedy was a higher form of art than comedy, and since also the solemn character of tragedy lent itself better than comedy to treatment in the musical idiom of the period, the first French operas were, as their title-pages clearly state, "tragédies". To be sure, there was the added phrase "en musique" ; but in the minds of its creators and its listeners as well as on the title-page, the "tragédie" came first and the "musique" second.

As though to emphasize the relationship of the new opera to the established drama, Lully chose for his librettist Philippe Quinault, who had already won a considerable reputation as the author of comedies and tragedies, on the strength of which he had been elected to the French Academy. The opera poems of Quinault show

<sup>(1)</sup> 'Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française.' In J. Bonnet, 'Histoire de la musique' (Amsterdam, n.d.), II : 80.

evidence of his long apprenticeship to the classical school of French drama. It is true that they are not to be compared with Racine's tragedies either in strength of construction or in force and precision of language ; and it is also true that they include licences both in the treatment of emotional scenes and in the introduction of numerous spectacular diversions which the spoken drama would not have admitted. Nevertheless, their basic structure conforms to the austere ideals of the tragic theatre. They have a unified plot ; the number of characters is restricted to those necessary for the story ; the action is properly motivated and unfolds by logical steps to the final dénouement ; and it includes many scenes of genuine dramatic power. The subjects themselves are often chosen from the same realm of ancient mythology which had furnished so much material to authors of French tragedies, as may be seen by a glance at the titles : ' Cadmus ', ' Thésée ', ' Atys ', ' Isis ', ' Proserpine ', ' Persée ', ' Phaëton '. ' Psyché ' and ' Bellérophon ', poems supplied to Lully by other librettists, are from the same source. ' Alceste ' is based on Euripides's tragedy. Only the subjects of the last three operas, ' Amadis ', ' Roland ' and ' Armide ', are of more modern origin, the last two being drawn from Ariosto and Tasso respectively. It will be noted that there are no historical subjects in the Lully operas. The critical French mind of that period, with its insistence on "reason" and "truth" in the drama, would not have accepted the inconsistency of actual historical persons appearing amidst the artificialities and conventions necessary to the operatic stage. Mythological characters, on the contrary, being only imaginary creatures anyway, could not be made any less real by being placed in such surroundings ; moreover, they lent themselves more freely than real persons to the imagination of the poet and composer.<sup>(4)</sup>

Lully's contemporaries judged the opera poems by much the same standards as were applied to spoken tragedies. For example, Quinault was criticized for the weakness of his diction, to which the damning adjective "doucereux" was applied ; he was accused of overworking the love element in his plots, and Boileau even attacked his operas on this account as dangerous to public morals.<sup>(5)</sup> The "diversions" were declared to be too numerous and too long, so that they distracted the minds of the audience from the story. The comic scenes in ' Cadmus ' and ' Alceste ' (the first two operas) were condemned as inconsistent with the nature of tragedy, and Lully in his subsequent works abandoned such scenes altogether.

<sup>(4)</sup> This is, of course, essentially the doctrine held by Wagner, though he gives much longer and more complicated reasons for it.

<sup>(5)</sup> Satire X.

Such criticisms show that the audiences of the seventeenth century, while willing to make some allowances for the special nature of the operatic form, were not disposed to tolerate in it any serious departure from the fundamental canons of good drama as exemplified in the works of Corneille and Racine.

One more link between opera and the classical French tragedy is found in the recitative. This is the very heart of Lully's works, and its invention cost the composer infinite thought and pains. He was not willing to adopt the Italian *recitativo secco*, because he felt that the two languages were so different that their proper declamation required different treatment. In conformity with the ideal of "imitation of nature" which played such a conspicuous part in French æsthetic theory of the period, Lully wished his recitative to be a faithful imitation of the speaking voice. For the best model of tragic declamation therefore he turned to the Comédie-Française, and particularly to the actress Champmeslé. Now it appears that the declamation then in vogue for tragedy was like a continuous melody, to which the actors always recited their verses, and that Mlle. Champmeslé had been carefully trained in this style of speaking by Racine himself.<sup>(6)</sup> It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that we have in the Lully recitative a fairly accurate reproduction, made by a musician, of the kind of declamation which was heard in Racine's tragedies during the lifetime of their author.<sup>(7)</sup> Just as the early Florentines tried to imitate in their recitative the imagined declamation of ancient Greek drama, so Lully in his recitative transferred to the opera the actual declamation of French classical tragedy. The recitative is, of course, strictly syllabic. And we know that it was performed exactly as noted, for Lully would never allow a singer to add the slightest embellishment to the written notes. Its monotony and its over-reliance on rhythmic and melodic clichés, of which even contemporaries complained and which were the cause of many bitter attacks in the eighteenth century, are undoubtedly only a reflection of the practice at the Comédie-Française. The typical formulas for each verse consists of a rising inflection in the first hemistich and a falling inflection in the second, with accents at the caesura and at the end of the verse; this was the system of tragic declamation which prevailed in the theatre from the time of Corneille and was still in force in the 1670's. It is true that

<sup>(6)</sup> Dubos, "Critical Reflection on Poetry", &c., trans. by Thos. Nugent. (London, John Nourse, 1748), III : 235, *et passim*.

<sup>(7)</sup> The evidence for this conclusion is reviewed at length in Romain Rolland's "Notes sur Lully", in his "Musiciens d'autrefois", (Paris, Hachette, 1908); also in an article by Georges Lote, "La Déclamation du vers français à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle", in the "Revue de Phonétique", Vol. II (Paris, 1912), pp. 313-363.



Racine was then cautiously introducing some modifications of the old rules in the interest of greater naturalness and truth of expression. We may see traces of this dawning reform in Lully's care to give due weight to the secondary accents of the verse, and above all in those comparatively rare scenes where the emotional force of the words is so strong that it is allowed to prevail over the conventional accents of the poetry, resulting in a recitative of extraordinary lifelikeness and power. Such a scene is that of the celebrated monologue, "Enfin il est en ma puissance", from the second act of 'Armide'. Again, sometimes the musician in Lully forgets his preoccupation with prosody long enough to introduce into the recitative a purely melodic phrase which may recur several times in the course of a scene like a sort of vocal *ritornelle*, with excellent musical and dramatic effect. A fine example of this is the lament of Merope, "O Mort ! venez finir mon destin déplorable", from the fifth act of 'Persée'. Scenes of this kind unquestionably helped to popularize a freer style of interpretation of the text, and so assisted in the evolution toward the more natural declamation which finally triumphed in the French theatre in the eighteenth century. Thus the opera not only received from the spoken drama, but gave in return as well.

## 2. ITALIAN OPERA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES : 'THE 'TRAGÉDIE À MACHINES' AND THE PASTORALE WITH MUSIC

Lully's operas were not the first attempts in France to combine drama with music. French poets and composers had been given a strong stimulus in this direction by the performance of some half-dozen Italian operas in Paris between 1645 and 1662.<sup>(\*)</sup> These operas were played by Italian companies imported by Cardinal Mazarin, whose motives in the matter were partly artistic and partly political. His aims were not fully achieved in either field : the project, though at first successful, was interrupted for seven years by the wars of the Fronde ; the later presentations were favourably received, but the Italian company could not sustain itself in the face of the growing nationalistic spirit and the increasing influence of French music during the early part of the reign of Louis XIV. They remained for some years without being called upon for their services, and were finally sent home in 1666 ; that was the end of Italian opera companies in Paris, except for a few sporadic visits, until the middle of the eighteenth century.

The exact influence of this tramontane invasion on the French opera as constituted by Lully ten years later has been variously

<sup>(\*)</sup> On this subject consult Henry Prunières, 'L'Opéra italien en France avant Lully' (Paris, Champion, 1913).

estimated. Lully himself would hardly have acknowledged any indebtedness to his Italian countrymen, for he feared their possible rivalry and was astute enough to realize that the future lay with a national French style of music, which he set himself assiduously to cultivate after 1662. He confined his efforts, however, for ten years to the production of ballets, maintaining almost until the very year of his own success with 'Cadmus' that opera was impossible in the French language. The immediate results of the Italian opera in Paris, therefore, are not to be sought in the works of Lully himself during the decade 1662-1672, but in their stimulating effect on French audiences and artists in general. That effect was threefold: it set the musicians experimenting in the direction of a kind of music suitable for continuous use with the drama—a problem not fully solved until Lully's invention of the recitative; it set the authors to writing dramatic works which made a point of introducing scenes where music might be used; and it engendered in the audiences a passion for grand tableaux and sudden changes of scenery, for prodigies and miracles on the stage—in a word, for all the spectacular possibilities of the famous "machines".

The machines of the seventeenth-century opera are an astonishing phenomenon. Those used by the Italians for their Paris performances were the inventions of Giacomo Torelli (1608-1678), one of the most imaginative stage engineers of the seventeenth century. They appear in full panoply in Luigi Rossi's 'Orfeo', performed in the theatre of the Royal Palace on Saturday, March 2nd 1647, before an immense crowd of spectators, including Cardinal Mazarin, Anne of Austria, the young King Louis XIV and the entire court. The prologue showed a fortress being stormed by a troop of soldiers; a breach having been made in the wall, the warriors entered with shouts of triumph. At this moment the figure of Victory in a triumphal chariot descended from heaven, singing verses in honour of the king and the queen mother. The 'Gazette' for March 8th reported that "no one could understand how Victory and her chariot were able to remain suspended in mid-air for so long a time".<sup>(1)</sup> Among the scenes of the first act were a forest "which appeared to be a hundred times larger than the stage itself"; a magnificent palace; and the Gardens of the Sun, where in the final tableau the Sun himself descended in a flaming chariot adorned with gold, carbuncles and diamonds. Other scenes no less amazing to the audience appeared in the following acts. The machines figured with equal prominence in other Italian operas given at Paris. In Carlo Caprioli's 'Nozze di Peleo e di Teti' (March 14th

<sup>(1)</sup> Year 1647, No. 27, p. 202. Quoted from Prunières, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

1654) we see Peleus transported by eight magicians in a flying chariot to Mount Caucasus ; Neptune striking the ocean with his trident and unloosing a tempest ; Jupiter flying on his eagle ; Thetis testing Peleus's affections by the somewhat unusual method of transforming herself into a lion, a dragon and a rock ; and in the closing scene the marriage of Thetis and Peleus, who appear " seated on a tall throne, the top of which becomes a perspective of the heavens, filled with Cupids ; and the other part of the stage takes the form of a cloud across which all the gods are seen hastening to the wedding ". Hercules leads in Prometheus, who has been released for the occasion on Jupiter's express order. " Juno and Hymen, accompanied by the Intelligences which form the celestial harmony, descend in a large chariot, and all join with the liberal and mechanical Arts, the inventions of Prometheus and led thither in his train, in a grand ballet on earth, while the Cupids execute simultaneously another ballet in the highest heaven."<sup>(10)</sup>

Marvels of this sort aroused tremendous enthusiasm among the audiences of Paris, an enthusiasm which was not damped by the fact that no one understood anything of the plots which the activities of the machines were supposed to adorn. The Italian language was not familiar to many Parisians at that time, and the difficulties of those who did know it were increased by the bad acoustics of the halls and the noisiness of the audiences. Furthermore, even had they understood every word they would not have been much better off ; for the stories were so cumbered with irrelevant comic personages and bizarre episodes as to be practically incoherent. To anyone who has tried to read Buti's poem of ' Orfeo ', M. Prunières's remark to the effect that " at the beginning of the third scene of Act I it becomes difficult to follow the thread of the action " must appear as a decided understatement. It is amusing to read the accounts of Loret, the naïve observer who reported the grand events of Paris during these years through the medium of his ' Gazette en Rhyme '. He dilates on the actors, the music, the dancing and the machines of the various operas ; but as for the poems, he ignores them altogether, as on the occasion of Cavalli's ' Ercole amante ' of 1662, when he wrote :

Je ne dis rien dudit Poème,  
D'autant qu'à mon regret extrême,  
Son langage mignard et doux  
Ne fut, onc, entendu de nous.<sup>(11)</sup>

<sup>(10)</sup> Prunières, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-167. There is a similar scene in the last act of Cesti's ' Pomo d'oro ' ; Burnacini's design for it is reproduced in the ' Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Oesterreich ', Vol. IV, Pt. 2, Pl. XXV.

<sup>(11)</sup> Loret, ' Muze historique ' (Ed. Livet), III : p. 465.

Other observers agree with Loret in reserving all their praise for the spectacular portions of the operas, with an occasional good word for the music, but hardly ever a mention of the authors. No one minded, except possibly the authors.

Among the immediate results of the enthusiastic reception of the Italian operas was the appearance at other theatres in Paris of plays using machines. Now machines were not altogether a novelty on the French stage at this time. They had been used in several tragedies during the first half of the seventeenth century, and the tradition actually went back to some of the medieval mystery plays. But Torelli's machines were more magnificent than anything ever before known, and they had taken such hold on the public imagination that French playwrights would have been blind indeed to ignore this powerful aid to success in their own works. Consequently we find after 1647 a sudden increase in the number of *tragédies à machines* performed in Paris. Of these, the most famous was Corneille's 'Andromède' (1650), which used some of the same apparatus that had functioned in Rossi's 'Orfeo' three years earlier. The employment of machines in a tragedy inevitably entailed the use of music as well. For Jupiter to descend from the skies to the accompaniment of conversation on the stage would have been disrespectful; but for him to descend in dead silence (except for the creaking of pulleys and the straining of ropes) would have been even worse. The function of the music was therefore twofold: to cover unwanted noises and to lend a certain amount of verisimilitude to otherwise bald and unconvincing dramatic situations. It is noteworthy that Corneille did not consider using music for any other purposes. He sets forth his attitude very explicitly (and, one cannot help feeling, a trifle contemptuously) in the preface to 'Andromède':

I have been most careful not to have anything sung which might be necessary to the understanding of the play, since ordinarily those words which are sung are not understood by the audience. . . . I have introduced music only to charm the ears while the eyes are engaged in watching the descent or ascent of the machines, or are occupied with something else which would prevent attention being given to what the actors might be saying.

In consequence the music enters only at those few points where the action can be understood by the mere movements on the stage. It plays no part in the development of the plot or in the expression of emotions. The chorus sings encouraging verses to Perseus while the latter, on his winged horse, fights and slays the dragon. After his victory the singers celebrate with a triumphal hymn. At the



end of the last act the chorus invokes Jupiter ; and the descent of this god along with Juno and Neptune, as well as their subsequent return to heaven, accompanied by most of the leading personages of the play, is all adorned with music.

Corneille's restraint in the matter of machines and music is even more evident in his 'Toison d'or' (1661). In thus restricting these accessories, however, he was acting against the tendencies of the time. There are some *tragédies à machines*, particularly after 1660, which seem to be nearly all machines and no tragedy, and where the real heroes are not the actors, but the engineers. Such pieces naturally included a large amount of music and were in effect almost operas, lacking only the recitative. As an example we may cite Boyer's 'Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé' of 1666, practically every scene of which introduces solos, duets, choruses and instrumental symphonies. So elaborate was the music, indeed, that the actors were not equal to the task of performing it ; the songs were sung by professional musicians behind the scenes, the actors on the stage meanwhile merely miming their parts.<sup>(12)</sup>

It is scarcely necessary to point out the part played by these *tragédies à machines* in preparing the way for opera. They familiarized audiences with the idea of using music as an adjunct to tragedy, and they abound in the kind of spectacular scenes accompanied by songs and instrumental music which are met with on almost every page of Lully's works. Quinault himself wrote one *pièce à machines* which he called a "tragi-comedy". It forms the fifth act of his 'Comédie sans comédie' (1654) and is entitled 'Armide et Renaud'—the subject he treated in his last opera thirty-two years later.

Another type of play stimulated by the Italian opera in Paris was the *pastorale*. Here again we have to do not with a new form, but one that had existed in France from the end of the sixteenth century. The *pastorale* had from its earliest beginnings been closely allied with music. The two most celebrated Italian *pastorales* of the sixteenth century—Tasso's 'Aminta' (1573) and Guarini's 'Pastor fido' (1581-90)—are among the immediate forerunners of the Florentine opera. 'Aminta' was produced at Florence in 1590 with incidental music by Cavalieri ; Monteverdi composed the interludes again in 1628 ; and there are other settings in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as one by Pizzetti in

<sup>(12)</sup> The composer is not named in the printed copy of the play, but Prunières (*op. cit.*, p. 332, note 1) conjectures that it was Louis de Mollier, a poet, singer and dancer, some of whose songs were published in a collection of 1661. The score has apparently not survived.

1914.<sup>(13)</sup> Tasso's own remark that music "is the sweetness and almost the soul of poetry"<sup>(14)</sup> applies with particular point to the pastorales which were so beloved by the Italian poets of his day. The natural relation between music and this kind of poetry may be realized when we think of all the pastoral elements in Italian early seventeenth-century operas (beginning with Rinuccini's 'Dafne' and 'Euridice') as well as the pastoral character of much of the madrigal poetry in both Italy and England at the same period. It was only natural that the French pastorales, which took for their models the works of Tasso and other Italian poets, should show a similar affinity with music. Lionel de la Laurencie has pointed out<sup>(15)</sup> how even the form of the verses in these pieces seems as if unconsciously designed for musical setting: balanced interchanges of short speeches, as in opera dialogues, rather than the long monologues characteristic of spoken plays in this period; occasional chansons inserted in the midst of the action; and a general vagueness in the emotions expressed, a kind of typical rather than personal outpouring of feeling.

The dramatic apparatus of the pastorale is simple and standardized. The scene is always out of doors, with forests, brooks, mountains and rivers forming a singularly peaceful and beneficent natural background. The characters are always shepherds and shepherdesses, nymphs and fauns, magicians, Pan and his satyrs, and the whole hierarchy of Olympian deities, with Diana and Apollo at their head. Even the names of the characters—Sylvia, Daphne, Amaryllis, Cloris, Lysis, Tircis, Philandre and the like—are the same in all pastorales. There is only one plot: every shepherd loves a shepherdess, but no shepherdess loves a shepherd; or if she does, it is always the wrong man and never the one who is sighing for her. All of them proceed to discuss love in general and their own griefs in particular at great length and in exhaustive detail. Occasionally the proceedings are enlivened by comic scenes with satyrs, by the wicked activities of enchanters or by the personal intervention of a god. Finally, for no particular reason, all the difficulties are smoothed out and the lovers are united. The formula is ancient, simple and certain, and is still doing steady service in the studios of Hollywood.

<sup>(13)</sup> See the article by L. Frati, 'Torquato Tasso in musica', in the 'Rivista musicale italiana' for 1923, Vol. XXX, p. 399.

<sup>(14)</sup> "... la musica ch'è la dolcezza, et quasi l'anima de la poesia . . ." 'Dialoghi', (ed. Solerti, Florence, 1859), III: 111.

<sup>(15)</sup> 'Les Pastorales en musique au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France', in Report of the Fourth Congress of the International Music Society, London, 1911 (London, Novello, 1912), pp. 139-146.

Its chief advantage from the viewpoint of a seventeenth-century French composer was that it constituted a complete drama in which practically nothing happened, and which could therefore be entirely set to music without the use of recitative. Instead of a developing intrigue (as in tragedy) which would have to be explained step by step as it went along, there were only those stereotyped situations which the audience would at once recognize, and which could be adequately accounted for in the simple, lyrical types of songs with which French musicians were familiar.

Examples of such songs they already had in plenty in the court ballets of the early and middle seventeenth century and in the numerous collections of airs and dialogues by such composers as Guéron, Boesset and Lambert. Both in the ballets and in the collections of airs the pastoral element is conspicuous. Many scenes of the former are little pastorales in music, and works like the 'Ballet des bergers' (1604) or the 'Ballet de Tancrède dans la forêt enchantée' (1619) consist entirely of pastoral scenes. In the collections of airs and dialogues, the texts (many of them written under the influence of the *précieux* movement) are full of "beaux yeux", "soupleurs", flights to solitude where echo exhales her plaintive voice in the valleys, apostrophes to rocks, trees, brooks, &c.—all material congenial to the pastorale. Some of the dialogues in these collections are actually miniature pastoral cantatas, in which the characters are the conventional shepherds and shepherdesses.

The French pastorale as such, however, had remained almost exclusively a literary production until the middle of the seventeenth century. Composers had been too preoccupied with the ballet to give attention to other dramatic forms. But once the example of Italian opera had inspired them with the idea of a French drama with continuous music, it was the pastorale which they found best adapted to this purpose. There were some experiments about 1650 in pastorales with mingled dialogue and singing, but the first one to be sung in its entirety was 'Le Triomphe de l'Amour sur des bergers et bergères' by Charles de Beys, with music by Michel de la Guerre, which was first presented (probably only in concert form) at the Louvre in January 1655. It is a piece of the most elementary sort, being composed merely of a series of chansons in dialogue arrangement. The opening of the first scene will give an idea of the plan :

*Climène* : Hé quoy, Lysis, ne veux-tu pas  
Cesser de me poursuivre ?  
*Lysis* : Il faut pour quitter tes appas,  
Que je cesse de vivre.

*Climène* : Tu me flates en vain, de grâce, laisse-moy.

*Lysis* : O Dieux ! puis-je obéir à cette dure loy !

—and so on for eight more verses.<sup>(16)</sup> Exactly the same scheme prevails in the three following scenes, so that all might have been (and probably were) sung to the same music. If a composer were not named, one might easily imagine that the text had been fitted to popular tunes of the time, after the manner of the earliest *opéras comiques*. Something of this kind actually was done in 1661 in a piece called 'L'Inconstant vaincu, Pastorale en chansons', which is nothing but a series of popular chansons strung together in such a way as to give some illusion of a plot.<sup>(17)</sup> These somewhat crude early experiments were witnessed with particular interest by two men, the poet Perrin and the composer Cambert, who were later to be closely identified with the beginnings of French national opera. Cambert in 1658 wrote music to a little comedy, 'La Muette ingrate', the author of which is not known. The first important result of his collaboration with Perrin was a pastorale performed at Issy in 1659, the text of which <sup>(18)</sup> was published by Perrin under the title 'Première Comédie françoise en musique représentée en France' (thus showing a fine disdain for the earlier works of Cambert and de Beys). Perrin described his work in the preface as "un essai d'opéra entièrement français fait à l'imitation des pièces en musique italiennes". How far he missed the goal of genuine opera may be judged by his own words :

J'ai composé ma pastorale toute de pathétique et d'expressions d'amour, de joye, de tristesse, de jalousie, de désespoir . . . j'en ai banni tous les raisonnements graves et même toute l'intrigue.

In spite of its lack of dramatic interest, the pastorale of Issy had sufficient success to encourage Perrin to turn out two more works in the same form almost immediately, both of which were failures.

Among the numerous pastorales with music which appeared in France between 1660 and 1670 we may note several composed by Lully. The fifth interlude of 'La Princesse d'Élide' (written in collaboration with Molière in 1664) is a pastoral dialogue ; the third *entrée* of the 'Ballet des Muses' (1666) is a *pastorale comique* ; the interludes for Molière's 'Georges Dandin' (1668) form a pastorale, with an elaborate finale on almost as large a scale as that of an opera ; and the pastorale in Molière's 'Amants magnifiques'

<sup>(16)</sup> Quoted from Prunières, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

<sup>(17)</sup> The 'Comédie de chansons' of 1640, printed in E. Fournier's 'Théâtre français au XVI<sup>e</sup> et au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles' (Paris, 1871), pp. 458 ff., is another example of this type.

<sup>(18)</sup> The music has not been preserved.



(1670), a masterpiece of this form, is notable for the first appearance of Lully's recitative style as found in the operas.

Quinault also had tried his hand at the pastoral style before embarking upon opera. Apart from the earlier 'Lysis et Hespérie' (1660) and some of the *intermèdes* in the comedy-ballet 'Psyché' (1671), his first important work in collaboration with Lully was a three-act pastorale, 'Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus', performed at the Académie de Musique in 1672.

The Académie de Musique was the official title of the Opéra, which had been founded in 1669 by letters-patent granted by the king to Perrin and two partners. It opened its doors to the public on March 3rd 1671, with 'Pomone', a pastorale in five acts by Perrin with music by Cambert, which ran for 146 performances. This work gives a large place to machines and has a complicated intrigue including many comic scenes of rather boisterous and slapstick character, in which the influence of the Italian *commedia dell' arte* may be discerned. Of Cambert's music only the prologue and the first act are known.

Robert Cambert as a composer has been underestimated by musicians because of the inevitable comparison with Lully. Born in Paris about 1628, a pupil of Chambonnières and organist of Saint-Honoré, he was appointed about 1665 to the post of Intendant de Musique under Anne of Austria. When in 1672 Lully became head of the Académie de Musique, Cambert realized that his career as an opera composer in Paris was finished. At the invitation of Charles II he went to London, where his operas may have been performed. He died in London in 1677, assassinated (so the story goes) by a servant.

His best work is the 'Pastorale heroïque des peines et des plaisirs de l'amour', first performed at Paris in 1672. The poem is by Gabriel Gilbert. The designation "pastorale heroïque" suggests the fact that this work far surpasses the conventional limits of the pastorale; it is, in fact, a real opera, similar to those of Quinault. As with 'Pomone', the prologue and first act of the music alone survive. It is an excellent example of the French style of this period. The harmonies are often individual and the rhythms, especially of the dances, are elegant and varied. The recitative, while not as meticulous in the matter of declamation as Lully's, is frequently more interesting musically. Cambert was reproached by contemporary critics for his alleged weakness in the depicting of emotion and for being an elegiac rather than a dramatic composer.

The pastorale with spoken dialogue and music disappeared with the advent of Lully's operas; but it was a victory like that won

by a missionary who drives out the gods of an older faith only to find them entering into the new, where they are worshipped under different names. Nearly every prologue in Lully is a complete pastorale, and there are numerous pastoral scenes in the body of the operas, especially in 'Isis' and in 'Roland'. Apart from the interminable conversations on love which fill so many of these scenes, there are traces of an exquisite feeling for nature and for the harmony between the natural setting and the mood of the drama. The verses of the celebrated air "Bois épais" from 'Amadis', and those of Renaud's air in the equally famous "enchantment" scene from the second act of 'Armide' are the purest type of pastoral poetry:

Plus j'observe ces lieux, et plus je les admire.  
 Ce fleuve coule lentement,  
 Et s'éloigne à regret d'un séjour si charmant :  
 Les plus aimables fleurs et le plus doux zéphire  
 Parfument l'air qu'on y respire.  
 Non, je ne puis quitter des rivages si beaux :  
 Un son harmonieux se mêle au bruit des eaux ;  
 Les oiseaux enchantés se taisent pour l'entendre.  
 Des charmes du sommeil j'ai peine à me défendre ;  
 Ce gazon, cet ombrage frais,  
 Tout m'invite au repos sous ce feuillage épais.

### 3. THE BALLET

Of all those earlier forms which entered into the Lully opera the ballet is the oldest and the most characteristically French.<sup>(19)</sup> Its origins may be traced back to some of the amusements in fashion at the courts of the late middle ages. A favourite medieval entertainment was the *momerie*, in which the mimetic action of the players was often accompanied by music. The earliest known *momerie* is the one recorded by Froissart at Paris in 1393.<sup>(20)</sup> Such mummeries were frequently performed as diversions between the courses of a banquet, being then known as *entremets*. The guests were seated on a raised platform at one end of the hall. The players entered to the sound of trumpets and were drawn round the room on a car or chariot of fanciful shape. Masked and in brightly coloured costumes, they descended from the chariot and gave their entertainment, which

<sup>(19)</sup> Cf. the admirable work by Henry Prunières, 'Le Ballet de Cour en France avant Benserade et Lully' (Paris, Laurens, 1914) for a detailed study of this subject.

<sup>(20)</sup> Froissart, 'Chronicles' (ed. de Lettenhove, Brussels, 1870), XV: 84-90. The chronicler's interest appears to be less in the spectacle itself than in the shocking accident which ended it. The king and five companions had disguised themselves as savages by covering their bodies with shredded linen to represent hair. The king's costume caught fire from a torch held by the Duc d'Orléans; the flames quickly spread to the other players, and four of them, including the king, were burned to death. Edgar Allan Poe has used this incident for the central situation of his tale 'Hop-Frog'.

often included dancing to vocal and instrumental music. Sometimes a primitive stage-setting was used, such as a rock from which a troop of satyrs would emerge and begin their dance. The *entremets* and *momeries* of the Burgundian court in the fifteenth century were noted for the brilliance of the costumes and for their elaborate settings and machinery. In these spectacles all the elements of the later ballet were already present.

The subjects of these fifteenth-century entertainments were for the most part either purely allegorical or drawn from medieval chivalric legends, occasionally from the Bible. A large place was always given to farce and buffoonery. During the sixteenth century, under Italian influence, the myths and legends of ancient Rome and Greece made their appearance in the French theatre, whence they were not to be dislodged for two hundred years. We find them in a new kind of piece, the *mascarade*.

The *mascarade* was the French adaptation of the Italian *mascherata*, which was essentially an out-of-door spectacle associated with Carnival time. As political relations between France and Italy became closer during the early sixteenth century, French visitors to Italian cities were impressed with the splendours of the *mascherate* and determined to introduce them at home. The French courts were naturally the first places to witness the new kind of entertainment. As a public spectacle the *mascarade* was usually associated with other festivities such as tourneys and ceremonial entrances of sovereigns into their cities, and in such *mascarades* the magnificence and variety of the spectacle was the chief end, to which everything else was subordinated. In the private *mascarades*, those given before a select audience at a palace or château, the opportunity for large-scale display was less, and other elements—poetry, dancing and music—assumed a more important part. This kind of *mascarade* was the immediate predecessor of the court ballet.

In the numerous private *mascarades* of the sixteenth century two main types may be distinguished: those designed as a setting for a ceremony of welcome or compliment to a distinguished guest, and those designed primarily for the amusement of an audience. In the former we recognize the prototypes of the later opera prologues, with their fulsome eulogies of the king. For example, a *mascarade* given for Charles IX at Bar-le-Duc in 1564 introduced the four elements—earth, air, fire and water—each in a magnificent chariot, vying for the honour of having made Charles the greatest king on earth. The four planets—the Sun, Mercury, Saturn and Mars—claim that they, because of their beneficent influences, should have the credit. At the end Jupiter himself appears and

announces that he alone has endowed the king with every possible virtue, adding handsomely that he is willing henceforth to content himself with ruling only the heavens while Charles rules the earth, so that between them they will "share the universe".

In those *mascarades* designed for the pleasure of the spectators as a whole rather than for that of a single guest, dancing was the chief attraction. It must be recalled that the dances were not performed exclusively by professionals, but that the ladies and gentlemen of the company took part as well. This was the case especially in the great closing dance, which at court was often honoured by the participation of the king and queen themselves. The vogue of the *mascarade* in France during the latter part of the sixteenth century was increased by the importation of certain Italian dances. In the French *courantes* and *gaillardes* the various steps were exactly regulated. The Italian dances, on the other hand, did not specify the movements so rigidly and consequently left more scope for the performers to exercise their own imagination. The principal Italian dances were the *brando* and the *ballo*, and from the diminutive of the latter (*balletto*) the French took the word *ballet*, which soon came to signify any kind of dance in which the movements were not prescribed by convention, but invented specially for each occasion. Thus in 1573 the court presented an elaborate entertainment in honour of some Polish ambassadors, called a *ballet*—the earliest use of the word in this sense, though the piece itself was essentially the same as the familiar *mascarades*.

It is unfortunate that very little of the music of the sixteenth-century *mascarades* is known. We learn from the accounts of eyewitnesses and chroniclers that there were frequent solos and choruses in addition to the spoken words, and that instrumental music was played for the dances; but since the music itself was almost never printed, the texts alone have come down to us.

None of these earlier pieces made any pretence of being more than a mere diversion for the eye and ear. Most of them were quite short, and even the longer ones consisted only of a series of dances without any particular connection. It was, therefore, a step of the utmost importance in the history of the French lyric theatre when an attempt was made to unify all the elaborate material of the ballet—settings, machinery, dances, poetry and music—by means of a single dramatic intention dominating and regulating the whole. This step was taken in the famous 'Circe, ou Le Ballet comique de la Reine', performed on October 15th 1581, in the Petit-Bourbon palace as part of the festivities surrounding the marriage of Mademoiselle de Vaudement, the queen's sister, to the Duc de Joyeuse.



Unlike previous works, the 'Ballet comique de la Reine' is known to us in detail through the full score, published by Ballard in 1582, and containing an account of the preparation of the work and minute descriptions of the settings and costumes, supplemented by pictures.<sup>(21)</sup> The principal author and director was Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx, an Italian who had come to Paris in 1560. The music was by Lambert de Beaulieu, a singer and lutenist, in collaboration with Jacques Salmon, a violinist of the royal chapel. We do not know the exact division of labour, but it is probable that Beaulieu wrote the songs and choruses and Salmon the instrumental music for the dances. A number of other artists also contributed their services.

The title 'Ballet comique' perhaps needs some explanation. It does not mean a "farcical ballet", but a "ballet in the manner of a comedy"—that is, a ballet which embodies a coherent dramatic action. It is a fusion of dance and drama, each ministering to the other. As the author states :

J'ay animé et fait parler le Balet, et chanter et resonner la Comédie, et y adjoustant plusieurs rares et riches representations et ornemens, je puis dire avoir contenté en un corps bien proportionné l'œil, l'oreille et l'entendement.<sup>(22)</sup>

In this conscious intention of combining several different arts in "one well-proportioned form" we see the influence of Baïf and his colleagues of the Academy, who had advocated and even attempted in practice this very ideal some fifteen years earlier. Beaujoyeulx undoubtedly recalled these previous pieces in the composition of his ballet. He was apparently influenced also by the Italian pastorales and other pieces which made such large use of music and were well known in Paris. At any rate, the 'Ballet comique de la Reine' contains many details reminiscent of the pastorales.

The plot is simple : Circe holds under a spell in her magic garden a number of cavaliers and minor divinities. Mercury tries to rescue them, but is also enchanted and made prisoner. The evil influence is overcome by the assistance of satyrs, nymphs, the four virtues, Minerva, and finally Jupiter himself, who strikes Circe with a thunderbolt and releases the captives.

This slight and uncomplicated dramatic framework left room for so many speeches, tableaux, dances, solos and choruses that the

<sup>(21)</sup> The text has also been printed in the collection 'Ballets et Mascarades de Cour de Henri III à Louis XIV', edited by Paul Lacroix (P.-L. Jacob, Geneva, 1868), Vol. 1. There is a vocal score, with some editorial additions, in the Michaelis collection 'Chefs-d'œuvre de l'opéra français.'

<sup>(22)</sup> Introduction "Au lecteur". It is, incidentally, "resonner la comédie", and not "raisonner", as M. Lacroix has printed it.

whole performance lasted from ten in the evening to half-past three in the morning, at which hour the audience was still apparently fresh, for every one "se meit aux bransles et autres dances accoustumées ès grands festins et esjouissemens", presumably till dawn. The king, the queen, the Princess of Lorraine, five duchesses and practically every member of the court, together with the most eminent musicians of the time, took part in this sumptuous production, the total cost of which was 400,000 écus, or over £16,000 in present-day values. It was the most lavish spectacle ever known and remained celebrated in France for generations. For details it is necessary to go to the text itself, to the descriptions of the costumes and the *mise-en-scène*. The very words glitter. Read part of the description of Circe's castle :

Au derrière du jardin, y avoit encores deux grosses tours au deux costez, dont les pierres estoient faictes en poinctes de diamans, et crenelées à l'entour, et sur les festes on voyoit voleter de belles et riches banderolles . . . puis au bas et au milieu de la porte du chateau . . . se voyoit une voulte toute à l'entour, faicte en façon d'une Conche ou esguille de mer, et le plus beau de ceste voulte paroissoit en ce qu'elle estoit toute percée de trois ronds, bouchés de verres de toutes sortes de couleurs : derrière ces verres reluisoient autant de lampes à huile, lesquelles representoient en ce jardin cent mille couleurs, par la transparence du verre. La porte estoit aussi revestue d'or, et de peintures diversement colorées, si bien qu'elles esblouyssoient la veüe des regardans. . . .<sup>(20)</sup>

And this was only one of half a dozen equally splendid sets, distributed around three sides of the hall, to say nothing of the elaborate chariots on which each group of actors made their entrances.

The placing of the musicians was typical for this kind of spectacle, though it seems strange according to modern ideas. The action did not take place on a stage, but on the floor, at the level of the spectators. There were a number of scenes already prepared and in view, which were used one after another. There was a dais for the king, the queen and the principal guests at about the centre of the hall. On the king's left was an arbour in the form of a cloud, the interior of which was gilded and lighted by many candles. In this "voulte dorée" (as it was called) were placed some forty singers and instrumentalists, forming "ten concerts of music, all different," a part of whose duties was to sing refrains to the verses of the other groups in the hall. (This "echo" effect was apparently much admired.) The forty also accompanied the descent of Jupiter by a six-part concert for voices and instruments. Another orchestra for

<sup>(20)</sup> Original edition, p. 7.

the entrances of the chariots and for dancing was placed behind two arched trellises, one on either side of Circe's garden and castle, which occupied the far end of the room, facing the king's dais. In addition to these concerts, the persons taking part in the various *entrées* of the ballet played instruments, sometimes accompanying their own songs.

Nearly all the music is printed with the full score, which comprises six choruses, two duets with choral refrains, two solos and two instrumental dances. The large proportion of choruses will be noted—a feature which is constant in French dramatic music throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The choruses are strictly syllabic and homophonic in style. In the choruses and especially in the solos some influence of the *vers mesuré* is noticeable, though the system is not applied with perfect consistency. In strong contrast are the regular dance metres of the instrumental numbers. One of the dance tunes of the "first ballet" is an air known as 'La Clochette', which was long remembered in France. The longest instrumental piece is the "grand ballet" at the end, consisting of many different figures marked off by contrasting dance rhythms, in a stately and formal style which well illustrates Beaujoyeux's definition of the ballet as "*des meslanges géométriques de plusieurs personnes dansans ensemble, sous une diverse harmonie du plusieurs instruments*".<sup>(24)</sup> Just what the instruments were is not indicated in the score, but the text mentions oboes, cornetts, sackbuts, lutes, lyres, harps and flutes, in addition to the "violons" (the generic name for all bowed string instruments) and the "orgues sourdes" which counterfeited the pipes of Pan.<sup>(25)</sup> It must be understood that not all these instruments were used at one time, but different combinations were called upon for each number.

I have dwelt at some length on the 'Ballet comique de la Reine' because it was the first of a long line of court ballets which continued through the seventeenth century and which finally merged into the opera. Beaujoyeux's idea of combining a ballet with a continuous dramatic action had for a time considerable influence, and pieces of this kind may be traced throughout the first two decades of the seventeenth century. Moreover, about 1600 a very significant change was made: the former spoken declamations were entirely replaced by songs. With this step the ballet became to all intents and purposes an opera. It was sung throughout and it embodied a single coherent plot, although it is true that this was nothing very

(24) 'Ballet Comique', Introduction "Au lecteur".

(25) This instrument, also called "orgues douces", is undoubtedly an organ with soft flute pipes, the same as the "organi di legno" in Monteverdi's 'Orfeo'.

substantial in the way of drama—nothing, in fact, more than a convenient pretext for dances and elaborate scenery. The best-known example of this form is the 'Ballet de la Délivrance de Renaud', performed in 1617, and lately republished by Henry Prunières.<sup>(26)</sup> The story here is essentially the same as that of the 'Ballet comique de la Reine': the rescue of a mortal from the wiles of an enchantress. The mortal is named Renaud, the enchantress Armide, and the plot is like a preliminary sketch for Quinault's opera of the same name nearly sixty years later.<sup>(27)</sup> As in the 'Ballet comique' also the music was by several different composers, including Gabriel Bataille, Pierre Guédron and the latter's son-in-law, Antoine Boesset.

The *ballet comique* (i.e. the ballet with a unified and continuous plot) died out after 1620, and it is not altogether easy to understand the reason for this. Why did not the French, just on the verge of a national opera, go on to perfect and develop the form? One answer, though I confess not a completely satisfying one, may be found in the growth of the Cartesian rationalism at this time. The demand for clarity, unity and simplicity led the drama into a path which eventually purified it of the extravagant features of the sixteenth century and in so doing prepared the way for Corneille and Racine. In this evolution there was no place for music. Corneille's theories (already mentioned) on the use of music in tragedy were shared by most of his countrymen, and especially by the dramatic poets. The ballet, where music was firmly entrenched, was by its very nature an irrational, fantastic creation. The divergence between the two forms was too great, and the current of contemporary thinking tended to increase the gap rather than diminish it. The problem of reconciling drama and music seemed insoluble. Consequently, while the tragedy entered on its great classical period, the ballet gave up almost all pretence of dramatic unity and concentrated on other matters. The result was a form known as the *ballet à entrées*.

The *ballet à entrées* is essentially a return to the earlier plan of the *masquerades*. It consists of a number of scenes of the most diverse character, held together only by some vague central idea. The pretence of unity was perhaps a gesture of homage to the form of the *ballet comique*; but although the theorists insist on describing the *ballet à entrées* as a "comédie muette", it has in reality no dramatic movement whatever. The various scenes or *entrées* merely pretend

<sup>(26)</sup> 'Le Ballet de Cour en France', Appendix.

<sup>(27)</sup> The story of Armida and Rinaldo (from Tasso's 'Jerusalem Delivered', Cantos XIV–XVI) has been the basis of numerous opera plots.



to illustrate different aspects of the central theme. When that theme is something like "The Four Seasons" or "The Five Senses", the subdivision is plainly indicated. But when dealing with such abstractions as "Chance", "Inclination", "The Fountain of Youth", &c., authors would strain their ingenuity by contemplating the subject under the headings of its causes, its effects, its species, its attributes, and so on in every possible way in order to find occasion for introducing as many different dances and tableaux as possible. In 1650, for example, there was a 'Ballet du Tabac'. This apparently unpromising subject yielded the following scenes :

*Prologue* : A group of Indians sing the praises of tobacco and the happiness of those peoples who possess it.

*First Entrée* : Four priests scatter powdered tobacco in the air to calm tempests, then smoke tobacco for incense around the altar.

*Second Entrée* : Two Indians twist tobacco leaves into a rope.

*Third Entrée* : Two Indians pound dried tobacco leaves in a mortar to make snuff.

*Fourth Entrée* : A number of tobacco addicts present snuff to one another.

*Fifth Entrée* : Smokers of all different nations receive tobacco from the Indians and use it in divers manners.

This ballet illustrates not only the way in which a subject would be treated, but also the kind of scenes which found favour in these productions. In spite of the astounding variety of subjects, certain backgrounds and characters appear again and again, so often as to be almost standard equipment. There are savages and exotic peoples (in which category, incidentally, the "Americans" are included), demons, sorcerers and monsters ; the four elements, the four seasons, the different countries and continents, and all sorts of allegorical and mythological personages ; soldiers, doctors, lawyers, judges, robbers and musicians—all costumed extravagantly, and often eccentrically. They move against backgrounds of fields, forests, mountains, grottoes, deserts, palaces, magic castles and the like—a spectacle of typical baroque richness and profusion, in which the imagination of the age, released from the fetters which elsewhere hampered its flow, rioted amid the abnormal, the fantastic, the comic, the monstrous and the grotesque.

All these performances used much music. The principal orchestra was placed on a platform to one side of the stage, but smaller groups often appeared on the stage and in many of the *entrées* the dancers themselves sang and played. The chief use of instrumental music was, of course, for dancing, but there were occasional independent

pieces. After 1640 it was customary to have an overture ; the earliest known example of the " French overture " was composed by Lully for his ballet ' Alcidiene ' in 1658, and he wrote another two years later for the prologue of Cavalli's opera ' Serse '. The vocal music of the ballets was more extensive than the instrumental. It included songs, either for a soloist or an ensemble group, which accompanied the dances ; occasional short solos inserted as " diversions ", to be heard for their own sake ; and songs called *récits*, which were not recitatives, but narrative or explanatory verses calculated to let the audience know what was going on. These *récits* might be either solo or choral. Choruses were sung for dancing also, though on the whole the proportion of choral music in these works was not high. The musical part of the ballet is treated by the theorist Menestrier in 1682 under the general heading of " Harmony ", which he defines as " voices and instruments sounding together in tune." Menestrier admits the use of different kinds of instruments, but favours the violins for dancing, for the rather quaint reason that " their strings being made of the guts of animals, they give forth a sound more harmonious, and more in accord with the movements of the body, than other instruments which are made of wood or metal ".<sup>(28)</sup>

The coming of Italian opera in the middle of the century did not diminish the popularity of the ballet, but rather increased it. The ballet actually invaded the opera in the form of *intermèdes* between the acts. In the case of the last three Italian operas performed in Paris these *intermèdes* were written, composed and performed by French musicians (including Lully) and they shared with the machines of Torelli the honour of completely distracting the audiences' attention from the operas. French composers and poets were encouraged to rival the Italians on their own ground, and the ballets of Benserade and Lully after 1658 represent the highest achievements in this form ; one of them, the ' Ballet royal de Flore ' (1669), has a majestic prologue and finale, and is filled with airs, dances and choruses of almost operatic proportions. In these ballets Lully purged his music of the last traces of its Italian accent and developed to maturity the style which later was to appear in his operas. The ballet at this point, in fact, lacked only one thing to make it a real opera : the presence of a consistent and developed plot. It was perhaps his collaboration with Molière in the late 1660's which convinced Lully of the possibility and the necessity of adding this element.

The comedy-ballets of Lully and Molière represented not a real union of drama and ballet, but merely their co-existence in one

<sup>(28)</sup> ' Des Ballets anciens et modernes ', p. 202.

spectacle. The ballet was there only to adorn the comedy, not (as a rule) to further the action. It entered in the form of *divertissements*, scenes appended at the end of each act, or occasionally in the course of an act, with no particular dramatic justification and with only a superficial relationship to the plot. In spite of this theoretically subordinate part, however, the ballet formed an amazingly large proportion of the whole. It is difficult for us to realize to-day that in the eyes of an audience of 1670 'Le Bourgeois gentilhomme' was not simply a comedy, but a grand ballet during the course of which a comedy was performed. The growing importance of music and dancing in the comedy-ballets reached a climax in 'Psyché' (1671), a work on a large scale involving a musical prologue, whole scenes in operatic form, recitatives, choruses, dances and a brilliant finale. With this work we are on the verge of opera. It remained only to abolish the spoken dialogue and substitute the recitative—a step which Lully took two years later with 'Cadmus et Hermione'.

All the roads followed by dramatic music in France during the seventeenth century thus converged in 1673 on the opera. Viewed in the light of its predecessors, that creation may seem to have very little about it that was absolutely new. It borrowed its dramatic scheme from the tragedy; it absorbed the *tragédie à machines* and the *pastorale*; it was indebted to Italian opera for a model which stimulated French composers and poets to develop a corresponding form for their own nation; and it took over the entire apparatus of the ballet, with the exception of the comic scenes, thus assuming its historical place in the long and brilliant tradition of the courtly spectacles of France. Did Lully then actually invent anything? Yes: the form of the overture and the French recitative. Beyond that his genius lay in the cleverness with which he assimilated the achievements of the past, in the sense of proportion with which he combined these elements into a national opera, and in the shrewdness and determination by virtue of which he made that opera a practical success.

## TEXT-BOOKS ON ORCHESTRATION BEFORE BERLIOZ

BY ADAM CARSE

ALTHOUGH it forms probably the most important landmark of a long series, Berlioz's famous treatise (1844) was by no means the first to offer instruction in orchestration to musical students. Composers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, if they learned these things from books, could gain information about the compass and capabilities of instruments only from the pages of such works as Virdung's 'Musica getutscht' (1511), Agricola's 'Musica instrumentalis deutsch' (1528), Luscinius's 'Musurgia' (1536), Praetorius's 'Syntagma musicum' (1619) and Mersenne's 'Harmonie universelle' (1636). Excepting Luscinius's and Mersenne's books, which were, respectively, in Latin and French, all of these were written in German, and their outlook and the information they provided would be largely out of date by the end of the seventeenth century.

In 1687 there appeared Speer's 'Grundrichtiger Unterricht der musikalischen Kunst', a practical work which, if it was not so archaic as those by Praetorius and Mersenne, still treated of some instruments which were obsolescent and belonged to a musical past that was hardly conscious of the art of orchestration as it began to be understood during the course of the eighteenth century. In his 'Neu eröffnetes Orchester' (1713) Mattheson discoursed on the orchestral and other instruments of his day, dwelling on their characteristics and use rather than on their technique. In all these books the old instruments which were doomed to disappear from the orchestra during the eighteenth century still held their places; the lute, theorbo, *viola d'amore* and *da gamba*, the recorders and medieval cornetts, still lingered while the orchestra was taking shape and growing out of the old instrumental groups into an organized body which eventually discarded them and called for power, colour and technique which was not theirs to give.

Towards the end of the seventeenth and during the eighteenth century a large number of instrumental tutors were issued which, although primarily intended for players, may also have served to



give instruction on the compass and technique of instruments for the benefit of composers who required such information. Some of these tutors comprehensively included in their scope all the usual orchestral instruments, and can therefore, in a rather remote sense, be reckoned precursors of the later type of text-book on orchestration. At least three German examples of such general tutors are known, namely: Majer's 'Neu eröffneter Musik-Saal' (1732, 1741), Eisel's 'Musikus Autodidaktos' (1738) and Lotter's 'Der sich selbst informirende Musikus' (1762). Majer and Eisel included what are the earliest known scales for the clarinet, an instrument which at that time was not very well known in Germany, and hardly at all outside that country. Both these authors also gave some technical information on the whistle and transverse flutes, the oboe, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone and cornett (*Zinke*).

A similar English book was Prelleur's 'The Modern Musick Master', first published in 1730. This includes instructions in singing, violin, harpsichord and organ, recorder, flute and oboe. Rather later English treatises, largely based on the 'Modern Musick Master', were 'The Compleat Tutor' and 'The Muses' Delight', both of which appeared c. 1754 and embraced a rather wider range of subjects, including singing, violin, cello and bass, recorder ("common flute"), flute ("German flute"), oboe, bassoon, horn and harpsichord. Some similar instructions in English are found in Tansur's 'A New Musical Grammar' (1746) and in his 'The Elements of Musick display'd', Book III (1762), the latter including in its scope the trombone (sackbut).

Still more comprehensive was Gehot's 'A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Music' (1784?). Within the range of forty-four pages Gehot covered all the theory of music and notation, of harmony and counterpoint, scales and fingering for organ and pianoforte, the scales and compass of all bowed string instruments including the *viola da gamba* and *viola d'amore*, fingering charts or scales for German flute, fife, oboe, "Grand Oboe or Voce Umane", clarinet, bassoon, "Hurdy Gurdy or Beggar's Lyre", French horn, bugle horn, trumpet, trombone, serpent, tabor pipe, bagpipe and a few other instruments, concluding with a Dictionary of Music.

If there were similar books in French, they have escaped my notice; but the musical part of Diderot's 'Encyclopédie' (1767) with its supplement (1776) and Laborde's 'Essai sur la musique' (1780) provided the same sort of instructions for students, if indeed they gained their knowledge of instruments from books. On the whole it is much more likely that budding composers of that time acquired their knowledge of instruments and of orchestration by

means of verbal instruction, by example and by practical experience. None of the foregoing books supplied exactly what would be expected from a text-book on orchestration, nor, in all probability, were they designed to do so. It was more for the player than for the writer of music that most of them were intended. The first work of the sort that was clearly intended as a guide to composers seems to have been L. J. Francœur's '*Diapason général des instruments à vent*', first published in Paris in 1772, and later revised and amplified by A. Choron under the title of '*Traité général des voix et des instruments d'orchestre, principalement des instruments à vent, à l'usage des compositeurs*', in 1813.

Louis Joseph Francœur (1738-1804) was a nephew of the composer François Francœur, and both in turn became violinist-leaders and directors at the Paris Opéra. Louis Joseph's book was concerned only with the wind instruments of the orchestra, his aim being, not to provide instruction for those who would play these instruments, but to inform those who would *write* for them without being able to play them. The various flutes, the oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet and serpent are treated systematically from the point of view of compass, clefs and transposition (if any), the most favourable keys, the awkward shakes and other difficulties of execution, and many points are illustrated by means of examples in musical notation. Probably for the first time the various transpositions for the clarinets are fully explained and clearly illustrated, and it is interesting to note that no less than eight different sizes of clarinet were known to Francœur, namely, in low G, A, B $\flat$ , B $\natural$ , C, and high D, E and F, although he stated that those in A, B $\flat$ , C and high D were the most effective. The tone-quality of each is described, and altogether, eighteen pages are devoted to the clarinets—by far the fullest explanation of these instruments up to that date—which at that time were only beginning to settle down in the orchestral family. The horns get sixteen pages, and the differences in the range of the first and second horns, the peculiar notation with two clefs,<sup>(1)</sup> the stopped sounds (for solo parts) and a series of intermediate sounds in the lowest register obtainable by relaxing the embouchure (also for solo work) are quite fully and intelligibly set forth. An interesting section on the combination of clarinets, horns and bassoons concludes with examples by "Signor Stamitz"<sup>(2)</sup> and "Signor Gaspard".<sup>(3)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> A notation much used at that time which, by using two clefs, gave the correct transposition for the player and the real sounds for the benefit of the score-reader.

<sup>(2)</sup> Johann Stamitz of Mannheim, who was in Paris in 1754-55.

<sup>(3)</sup> No doubt Gaspard Procksch, a clarinet player in La Pouplinière's orchestra in the 'fifties and 'sixties.

That Francœur's book fulfilled its purpose and achieved some success may be gathered from the fact that about forty years after the original publication Choron republished it with such additions as had become necessary in order to bring it up to date. The first seven chapters of the old book were embodied in the new version, and to these Choron added sections on the string instruments, singing, piano and organ, harp, trombone, the "tromba",<sup>(4)</sup> cor anglais, bassethorn, timpani and other percussion instruments, "tuba curva" or *buccin*,<sup>(5)</sup> directions on how to arrange the full score, and a grand chart showing at a glance the compass of all instruments and voices.

Undoubtedly the honour of having produced the first real text-book on orchestration, the pioneer in a series which culminated in Berlioz's famous work, belongs to France. As might be expected, in the course of time, others followed Francœur's lead, and round about the end of the century a very similar treatise by Othon Vandenbroeck, a Netherlands horn-player then living in Paris, appeared under the title of 'Traité général de tous les instruments à vent'. The first German attempt to do the same sort of thing appears to have been the 'Vollständige theoretisch-praktische Musikschule für alle bey dem Orchester gebräuchlichen wichtigen Instrumente' (1810-11), by Fröhlich, the professor and director of music at Würzburg University. Fröhlich's book covers the whole range of instruments, string, wind and percussion, with characteristic German thoroughness, and includes no less than seven pages on the serpent.

In 1828 Sundelin's 'Die Instrumentierung für das Orchester' appeared in Berlin, together with its companion-book on instrumentation for military bands. Sundelin was a clarinet player in the Berlin Opera, and his books have the interest that they are probably the first to admit the valved brass instruments which only a few years before had made their first appearance in Berlin. Perhaps the most interesting feature in Sundelin's orchestral book is an advertisement on the last page with a price-list of Stölzel's newly-invented valve instruments.

The first French book to treat of the valve instruments appears to be J. Catrufo's 'Traité des voix et des instruments à cordes, à vent, et à percussion' (Paris, 1832). Valved instruments had reached Paris (from Berlin) only a few years before the appearance of Catrufo's book and were still a novelty in French orchestras and military bands. The author was an Italian opera-composer and

<sup>(4)</sup> This was Frichot's new bass horn, actually an improved serpent.

<sup>(5)</sup> A trombone with a bell shaped like a serpent's head.

singing-teacher who lived for some time in Paris and eventually settled in London. The 'Traité' deals with five bowed string instruments, including three- and four-stringed double basses, five plucked string instruments, twenty-two wind and ten percussion instruments. The clarinets, of which Catrufo mentions five (in A, B $\flat$ , C, high E $\flat$  and F), and their transpositions are fairly fully treated, but there is no mention of the bassethorn or bass clarinet. The cor anglais and serpent are included, also valved horns and trumpets, *cornet-à-pistons* and keyed bugle.<sup>(6)</sup> Probably for the first time the ophicleide (alto and bass) finds a place in this text-book; this instrument, according to Catrufo, was invented by "le Sieur Halari Asté, Rue Mazarine No. 37, à Paris". The double-action harp gets only three lines, but more attention is given to the guitar.

Neither Francœur's nor Catrufo's books can have been much used in France after the appearance in 1837 of Georges Kastner's 'Traité général d'instrumentation', approved by the Institut de France<sup>(7)</sup> and adopted by the Conservatoire. This is a very considerable work, covering almost all known musical instruments, past and present, and including the latest improvements in wind instruments, of which there were many just at that time. It will give some idea of the scope of this treatise when it is said that, in addition to the human voice, thirty-one stringed instruments, fifteen with keyboards, fifty-six wind and fourteen percussion instruments are treated fairly fully. While the 'Traité' was devoted to the compass and executive capabilities of the instruments, their use in combination was discussed in a companion volume named 'Cours d'instrumentation, considéré sous les rapports poétiques et philosophiques de l'art'.<sup>(8)</sup> This includes a generous selection of examples in full score from the works of Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, Meyerbeer, Weber, Beethoven, Berlioz and several lesser composers, as well as some examples of scoring for military band.

Improvements in the mechanics of wind instruments were proceeding at such a rate during the forties and fifties that Kastner was obliged to revise and add to both his 'Traité' and his 'Cours' within a few years of their first appearance. Thus, a second edition of the 'Traité', with a considerable *Supplément*, was issued in 1844, and some additions were tacked on to the end of the 'Cours'. The improved flute mechanism of Boehm, and all the improvements and inventions which Adolph Sax was making almost every day in Paris

<sup>(6)</sup> Called *trompette à clefs*, but not the real keyed trumpet, which was first made in Vienna.

<sup>(7)</sup> The certificate of the Institut is dated July 30th 1836, and is signed by Lesueur, Cherubini, Paer, Auber, Halévy and Berton.

<sup>(8)</sup> The certificate of the Institut is dated March 11th 1837.



in the early 'forties, had to be taken into account, and altogether, Kastner must have found it difficult to keep pace with the rapid progress going on all around him. He just managed to get the saxophones and saxhorns into his *Supplément* of 1844, and then, almost before it had time to circulate, his work was given its death-blow by the advent of Berlioz's treatise.

After this there could be no question of any further editions of the older books, which no doubt accounts for the fact that copies of these are so scarce and may be found now only with some difficulty on the shelves of the second-hand dealers. Wilhelm Schneider's 'Historisch-technische Beschreibung der musikalischen Instrumente' (1834) can hardly be reckoned a text-book on orchestration, although it does cover much of the ground usually found in such treatises. But there was one more real text-book to come, this time in German, before they were all turned into back-numbers by Berlioz: this was a pair of small volumes which are very little known, namely Gassner's 'Partiturkenntniss' (1838). The book is sensible, sound and worthy, a typical product of the German musical mind which knew its Beethoven and Weber well, but had yet to get into touch with the progress in orchestration that was going on outside Germany.

When Berlioz's treatise appeared in 1844, and after it had been amplified by a supplement ('L'Art du chef d'orchestre') added in 1856<sup>(1)</sup> and translated into German and English, a new standard was set: the old books were hopelessly outmoded, and except for two Belgian efforts, Andries's 'Aperçu theorique de tous les instruments de musique' (1856) and Gevaert's 'Traité général d'instrumentation' (1863), there was a comparative lull in the output until towards the close of last century, when a fresh crop began to appear, including two English works by Corder (1896) and Prout (1897) and several in German by Bussler, Hoffmann, Jadassohn, Riemann and others.

Berlioz's book has never been surpassed, even though in some respects it inevitably grew out of date as time went on, but the vital matter applies just as much as it did nearly one hundred years ago.

In musical art theory always follows practice, and the writing of text-books is therefore generally left to the academics, who build up their theories out of what the composers have already created. But Berlioz was no academic: he was a creator able to practice what he preached and preach what he practised. Was ever anyone better fitted to write about orchestration?

<sup>(1)</sup> 'Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration. Nouvelle édition' (Paris, 1856).

## SOME NOTES ON A BODLEIAN MANUSCRIPT

BY GEORGE A. THEWLIS

THE Bodleian Library at Oxford has recently acquired a manuscript of seventeenth-century songs of considerable interest to students of that period.<sup>(1)</sup> One thing especially renders the collection remarkable, and that is the fact that many are songs which escaped those indefatigable musical pirates, John and Henry Playford. Several of the composers are anonymous, but included are compositions by John Hilton, Stephen Mace, Robert Ramsey, Will. Brett, John Jenkins, Robert Johnson, Henry Lawes and John Wilson. Many by these two latter composers appeared in Playford's 'Musical Companion' at a later date.

The manuscript, whose original owner was most probably a keen Royalist, is undated, but I should place it no later than 1650, on the assumption that two of the songs are on the death of Charles I, and were probably written shortly after his execution in 1648. The words of one, to music by Ramsey, are as follows :

What teares (deare Prince) can serve to water all  
The plants of woe growne in your funerall ?  
Or how can musick's saddest tones expresse  
With sighes or teares a publique heavinesse ?  
Only thy death is still the fatall ground  
Whereon all hearts their mournfull descant sound.

The other, by an anonymous composer :

Victory, victory, Hell is broken downe,  
The Martyr hath put on a glorious crowne ;  
Ring, bells of Heaven, him welcome thither,  
Circle him, all ye angells round together.

The well-known lines attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh, 'What is our life?', here appear as a song—again by an anonymous composer—in a slightly different version from those set by Gibbons :

<sup>(1)</sup> MS. Don. c. 57.

What is our life ? A play of passion ;  
Our mirth, the musicall division.  
Our mother's wombs the tyring houses be  
Where we are drest for life's short comedy.  
Earth is the Stage, Heav'n the spectator is  
Who sits and marks who here doth act amisse ;  
Our graves that hide us from the scorching sunne  
Are like drawne curtains when the play is done.  
Thus playing, post we to our latest rest,  
And then we dye in earnest, not in jest.

There are several original lyrics by Herrick and other poets which do not appear in the collected works of those authors. These have been included by Mr. Norman Ault in his recently published anthology<sup>(2)</sup> ; but the most important song to musicians is the earliest known setting to Shakespeare's 'Hark, hark, the lark', from 'Cymbeline'. Again, the composer is anonymous, but its importance lies in the fact that so few contemporary settings of Shakespeare are known. One of two musicians whose works are included in the manuscript may be the composer : Robert Johnson, who in 1612 wrote music to Shakespeare's 'Tempest', and who was a musician in his company, and John Wilson, who, according to Rimbault, was also a singer in the same company. To the best of my knowledge the song has never appeared in print, nor is it mentioned in any book of reference. The setting is as shown overleaf.

The subsequent owner of the manuscript thought so little of the collection that he used many of the songs as a sort of Shepherd's Calendar to set down the flowers and vegetables that appear each month. This horticultural information is scrawled all over most of the pages, but the original writing is sufficiently clear to make the manuscript a very valuable contribution to the songs of the period.

Now that we have a complete collection of Tudor music to the year 1630 and there is some hope of our having a complete Purcell one day, some musician of leisure *with the necessary knowledge* ought to make a collection of the songs written between these two periods. I emphasize "with the necessary knowledge" because the songs are mostly written for voice and bass, and very rarely figured. This fact has too often resulted in "arrangers" adding their own corrupt harmonies, which are utterly foreign to the period and could not possibly be played on the lute, theorbo or other accompanying instrument of that time. We suffer to-day from far too many of these "arrangers", who cover their own poverty in originality by

(2) 'A Treasury of Unfamiliar Lyrics' (Gollancz, London, 1938).

## HARK, HARK, THE LARK

Shakespeare's 'Cymbeline'

Anon.  
Bodleian MS. Don.C 57

Hark, hark, hark! the  
lark at heav'n's gate sings, at heav'n's gate sings,  
And Phoebus 'gins to rise, The winking  
Ma-ry-buds beg-in to ope their gold-en eyes; With  
ev-'ry-thing that pret-ty is, My la-dy—sweet, a-rise; a-  
-rise, a-rise, My la-dy sweet,—a-rise!



taking the works of earlier composers and daubing them with their own pitchy fingers.

It is true that many of the songs are sometimes stilted and experimental, but they certainly do not deserve the strictures of Burney, whose chief criterion was "Elegance". Wilson himself was the greatest experimenter of all who led up to Purcell, and no composer before him used so many keys, a fact which led Lawes in a laudatory poem to refer to his composing in "unknown ways".

No great composer arrives spontaneously ; he is the cumulation of those who have gone before, and Purcell owes something at least to this musical workshop of royalist composers with their experiments in recitative, variety of key, declamation and word-painting.

Several years ago I approached Philip Heseltine with a view to his undertaking the task of editing Lawes and his contemporaries. His reply is a lesson to any who now wish to attempt the work :

I have long had it in mind to make an edition of Lawes, but I do not yet know his period sufficiently well to be very sure of myself in reconstructing the accompaniments. One has to be as careful not to make him into a late Elizabethan as to steer clear of anachronism on the other side and make him a modern.

It is to be hoped that if the work is ever attempted it will be undertaken by someone with as conscientious a regard for the works of the dead as was he whose early death we who knew him so deeply deplore.

## FOUR UNKNOWN EARLY WORKS BY BEETHOVEN

BY JACK WERNER

In the course of recent research work in the British Museum I was lucky enough to come across four extremely interesting, and for all practical purposes unknown, early works by Beethoven, in the original MSS. They are the following :

- (a) : Rondo (*Allegretto*), in B flat major, for piano solo ;
- (b) and (c) : Two Duets for piano :
  - (i) Gavotta (*Andantino*), in F major ;
  - (ii) *Allegro*, in B flat major ;  
(followed by the opening six bars of a third Duet,  
' *Marzia lugubre* ' ) ;
- (d) : Trio for piano, violin and cello, in two movements :
  - (i) *Allegro*, in D major (in which one sheet, apparently containing 33 bars, is missing) ;
  - (ii) Rondo, *Allegretto*, in D major.

Until about 1919 these were believed to be the work of Mozart, and they are included as such in the second edition (1905) of Köchel's complete Catalogue of Mozart's works (respectively numbered 511a and, in the Supplement, 41a and 52a), where they are stated to have been composed by Mozart in 1786 and to be "apparently unpublished".

The discovery of their true identity makes rather romantic reading. In the Catalogue of Music-Manuscripts (1921) in the Manuscript Room of the British Museum, these MSS were originally entered as being by Mozart, an entry amended at some later date by a note in ink stating that they were only "attributed to" Mozart, the word "Autograph" being accordingly scored out. (This is still—December 1940—their description.) My natural curiosity having been aroused, I pursued the matter further and in the new (third) edition of the Köchel Catalogue edited by Alfred Einstein (published October 1937) I found the complete solution of the mystery. There the four works are included in the Supplement (numbered respectively 284i, 284g and 284h by Dr.

Einstein), with data of sources of information regarding the recent "repatriation" of the MSS.

Georges de Saint-Foix, the noted French musicologist and one of the leading authorities on Mozart and eighteenth-century music, doubtless also having his curiosity aroused by the entries in the 1905 Köchel, investigated the compositions, and in 1919 submitted the results of his researches in an absorbingly interesting and lengthy article entitled: 'Mozart et le jeune Beethoven: les manuscrits inconnus du British Museum', to the 'Rivista Musicale Italiana' of 1920, in which he proves conclusively that the four MSS are not the work of Mozart, but are early compositions of Beethoven. In 1926, under M. de Saint-Foix's editorship, a private edition (numbering 500 copies) of these hitherto-unpublished MSS was issued for the Société Française de Musicologie, in a single volume entitled: 'Œuvres inédites de Beethoven', by E. Droz, a Paris dealer in rare and unusual books.

A great debt of gratitude is due to M. de Saint-Foix for the valuable results of his researches into these MSS. Unfortunately, however, his edition shows a remarkable degree of inaccuracy; so much so, indeed, that it can only be explained, in part at any rate, by the belief that he could not possibly have seen the actual MSS, but only rather poor photographic reproductions; and this does appear to have been the case, since he never once refers to the actual MSS, but only to facsimiles, acknowledging, both in the 'Rivista' article and the preface to his edition, his indebtedness to two members of the British Museum staff for the facsimiles.<sup>(1)</sup> In addition to these numerous errata, he also omits, for the greater part, the few phrasing and expression marks inserted by Beethoven.

I must also challenge one statement, of considerable importance, which M. de Saint-Foix makes, both in the 'Rivista' article and in his preface (quoted also in the 1937 Köchel). It is to the effect that the incomplete first movement of the Trio is wanting in *two pages*. At the end of each of the two movements Beethoven added a number: in the case of the complete second movement (*Allegretto*) I found that the number—225—corresponded to the number of bars in the movement. It is, therefore, safe to assume that the number—133—which appears at the end of the incomplete first movement (*Allegro*) likewise indicated the original length of that movement. By a process of simple arithmetic one gathers that the extent of the missing section (constituting the development of the

(1) "Les fac-similés de ces divers œuvres inédites" (I quote from the article) "nous ont été procurés par les soins de MM. Barclay Squire, Conservateur du British Museum, et W. C. Smith, auxquels nous adressons ici tous nos remerciements."

movement) is only 33 bars—the average content of *one* page. Blank pages and whole sheets are not uncommon in Beethoven's MSS. Indeed, in the present MSS there is a whole blank sheet (after the first folio of the Duets), crossed through in pencil on both sides; also the remainder of the last sheet of the Duets (following the fragmentary 'Marzia lugubre')—1½ pages—is left blank (though uncrossed).

M. de Saint-Foix's grounds for his "absolute certainty" regarding his identification of these MSS are of great interest.

I have now arrived [he says], at a state of absolute certainty, after a minute examination of the facsimiles of the MSS,<sup>(1)</sup> that neither the Trio nor the other compositions could possibly have been written by the hand of Mozart.

And he proceeds, in his 'Rivista' article<sup>(2)</sup>:

Caractères de l'écriture, procédés de composition, un certain mélange de trouvailles originales et d'une virtuosité souvent brillante, parfois banale, tout concorde, tout s'unit pour nous convaincre que nous sommes en présence de témoignages infiniment curieux et importants de l'art du jeune Beethoven, témoignages remontant précisément, croyons-nous, à la période que nous venons d'étudier, 1785 à 1795 environ, et que nous qualifierions volontiers de 'mozartienne'. Notre conviction, s'affirmant plus fort d'année en année, nous autorise aujourd'hui à porter le fait à la connaissance du monde musical. Quelques mois avant la guerre, une preuve nouvelle venait d'ailleurs confirmer notre croyance.

He explains (but does not justify) the fact of Köchel's having included these MSS in his 1905 edition by the belief that he had probably been deceived by the neat handwriting of the youthful Beethoven. In that edition it is stated that the middle movement of the Trio is missing (though there is no reference, strangely enough, to the missing section of the first movement). Saint-Foix, however, shows that the two movements constitute the complete work, which is in the Italian sonata form popular in the eighteenth century with the school of John Christian Bach, and still in common use in England at the end of that century.<sup>(3)</sup> The new Köchel, however, though it accepts Saint-Foix's findings on all the other points, still has the legend: "Der Mittelsatz fehlt" . . . !!

In the manuscript the Rondo for piano solo is unnamed, nor is there any speed indication. Köchel, however, originally described it as a "Rondo movement, *Allegretto*".

M. de Saint-Foix unhesitatingly attributes these four works to the period 1785 to 1795 approximately, which he describes as the

<sup>(1)</sup> See footnote on preceding page.

<sup>(2)</sup> Contributed and published in French.

<sup>(3)</sup> Beethoven's Sonata Op. 6 for piano (4 hands) is a perfect example of this form.



vital "Mozartian" period of Beethoven's development: the Duets and Trio very probably between 1785 and 1790, and the Rondo (which he describes as "un magnifique rondo") very soon after Beethoven's taking up residence in Vienna, or just before his departure from Bonn, in 1791.

That truly great man and musician, the late and much-lamented Sir Donald Tovey (whom I have the privilege of numbering among my masters), having examined my edition of these MSS, described them characteristically as "interesting early Beethoven *arcana*", adding:

How any sane person could ascribe them to Mozart is explicable only by the decline in German musical scholarship. I see no reason to doubt the attribution to Beethoven: the diffuseness and inaccuracy of the style is exactly in line with the qualities of other stuff written at Bonn which he did not publish—*e.g.* the Trio in G for pianoforte, flute and bassoon.

With reference to the suggestion I was bold enough to make that he might feel disposed to fill up the *lacuna* of the Trio, Sir Donald said:

For a mature work of Bach the data would, in some parts of some art-forms, almost give an authentic text of a missing page (*e.g.* the unfinished fugue in 'Die Kunst der Fuge'); but for such very early Beethoven the data leave us at a loose end, and neither scholarship nor art would make the effort of conjecture worth while.

In conclusion, Sir Donald commented upon the fact that "Beethoven's own phrasing at Bonn retained some childish fussiness in his pianoforte writing (*e.g.* groups of two slurred and two staccato semiquavers at impossible *tempi*) which he soon dropped"; adding, with reference to the several inaccuracies in the text, that one should "not expect accuracy from early Beethoven".

These four MSS are bound, in the British Museum, in a volume entitled: 'W. A. Mozart. Compositions. Autograph', which also includes two authentic autograph works by Mozart: (i) 'De Profundis' for four voices, with figured bass for organ accompaniment (the top line marked at the beginning: "Violins I and II", being left blank), composed in 1771; and (ii) a transcription for string quintet of the Serenade for wind instruments in C minor (1782)—comprising 27 folios in all.

The original description of these MSS in the Catalogue of Music-Manuscripts (1876-1881) makes interesting, not to say puzzling reading. The Trio is described (each of the two movements separately) as "for *two pianos (four hands)*" (the italics are mine)!! The Rondo, as "a movement in B flat for pianoforte

solo, apparently allegro. The bass has not been completely added." This last refers to the section consisting of bars 106 to 121, of which, being a note-for-note repetition of bars 9 to 24, Beethoven, with his customary desire for labour-saving, filled in only the right hand, leaving the left hand to be understood. (It is rather surprising to find that, in the Catalogue of Music-Manuscripts, published in 1921, the bass is still described as "imperfect".) All as "Compositions by W. A. Mozart, autograph . . . apparently unpublished." At some later date a note was added in ink, "attributed to Mozart", and before the word "autograph", the words "Nos. 1 and 6" (alluding to the 'De Profundis' and Quintet MSS).

The history of the MSS is as romantic as the other aspects of their career and will make a fitting coda to this brief article.

Together with a one-page Minuet and (unfinished) Trio for orchestra in C major by Beethoven (likewise originally declared to be by Mozart, later "attributed" to him and finally identified with the other MSS by Saint-Foix) they were given by the Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria to the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul-Aziz who, probably caring little for these relics of the eighteenth century, gave them as a present to his musical director, Guatelli-Pasha, whose son, W. Guatelli-Bey, sold them to an English collector, Julian Marshall. The British Museum purchased them from him (according to the stamped record on the fly-leaf of the volume of MSS) on July 10th 1880, March 26th and April 9th 1881.<sup>(5)</sup>

<sup>(5)</sup> The author's edition of the two Duets is soon to be published by Messrs. Curwen, and the piano Rondo by Messrs. Cramer.—Ed.

## MOZART AND THE VIOLA

By J. ARTHUR WATSON

It appears on the face of it something of a coincidence that the prestige of Mozart as a composer and of the viola as an instrument should have risen concurrently during the last fifty years from a point in the neighbourhood of zero to something like pre-eminence. Certainly Mozart's stock has never stood so high as to-day : indeed, if the volume of recent books and articles about him is a true criterion, he must be pronounced nearly as important as all the other composers put together. As with the musicians' composer, so with the composers' instrument : the output of music for the viola during the same period outweighs in value if not in quantity that written for either violin or cello. These phenomena are not so completely disparate and unconnected as might at first sight appear, for Mozart, as I shall try to show, was a mighty pioneer of the viola. It is true that although he played it himself (in spite of the fragile appearance of his fingers) he never composed a solo work for it ; and it may be assumed that had he taken part in the controversy in 'The Strad' as to whether the viola was a solo instrument, he would have inclined to the negative side. But neither did he write anything for cello solo. His finest writing for the cello is to be found, not in the soloistic "Prussian" Quartets, but in the slow movements of the string Trio and the Quartets in B flat and C (K.563, 458, 465). Even the violin sonatas are properly regarded as duets, and his contribution to the dispute would probably have been a disavowal of solo instruments and solo music alike, and a reminder that music consists in the blending of more voices than one. The fact then that Mozart wrote no solo work for the viola is immaterial ; what is significant is that he handled it with a daring and originality which in his day must have seemed revolutionary. This has too long been obscured by the extravagant Beethovenolatry of the Victorian age, when it was fashionable to grasp at every opportunity of exalting Beethoven at Mozart's expense. Grove's 'Dictionary of Music' was a bad, if not the worst, offender in this regard ; in it we find Ebenezer Prout maintaining the astounding proposition that "with Beethoven the Minuet reached

its highest development". Joseph de Marliave's too rhapsodical study of Beethoven's quartets, with its frequent sneers at Mozart, represents in this respect a hang-over from the nineteenth century; so does that of Hadow, who thought that "it was no disrespect to Mozart's genius to say that he never wholly attained to the ideal of a quartet as a *quatuor dialogué*" as Beethoven did. In this he was following C. F. Corder (in Grove) who quoted the opening movement of Beethoven's first Quartet to prove his point. Yet this movement, with its five-note figure tossed about from one instrument to another, is deeply indebted to the surely more beautiful *Andante* of Mozart's Quartet in C; and the corresponding movement of the first of Mozart's greater quartets (K.387) is demonstrably at least as *dialogué* as its opposite number. (How many a shy viola player, by the way, on his introduction to this Quartet must have been aghast to find himself, at bars 70-1, suddenly left entirely alone in a formidable run of semi-quavers?)

As the spider sits at the centre of her web, so the viola lies at the musical core of the quartet. That is no doubt why the composers chose it as their instrument; and that is also why any composer's treatment of the viola is an index of his quality. Let us see then what use Mozart made of the viola by examining some of the works in which it is most prominent. In his quartets, the four voices are *pares* though the first violin is *primus*; and there is no conspicuous difference calling for special mention in the way they are handled. The works I am concerned with are the Duos for violin and viola, the string Trio, the piano-clarinet-violoncello Trio, the five string Quintets and the 'Sinfonia concertante' for violin and viola. These will be taken as nearly as may be in their chronological order.

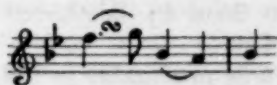
1. *String Quintet in B flat, K.174*, composed in 1773 at the age of 17.

This work followed a number of quartets not usually regarded as of much importance; but the new problem posed by the extra voice seems to have spurred Mozart into producing something of far greater interest. Aulich and Heimeran rightly call it "perfectly delightful". It has all the bright dewy freshness peculiar to the period which covers 'Il Rè pastore', the 'Exultate' motet, the violin concertos and the Symphony in A (K.201). Its distinguishing feature is precisely that it is studiously and deliberately *dialogué*. If a title had to be devised for it, it might suitably be named 'The Mocking Bird'. It is a *tour-de-force* in antiphony.

With one possible exception, and that an unhappy one, Mozart nowhere used the extra viola in the quintet merely to thicken the texture of the harmony of what might have been a quartet. In the

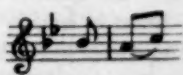


invaluable article on Mozart in Cobbett's 'Survey of Chamber Music', Abert tells us that in this case "he used Michael Haydn's excellent quintets as models". However that may be, the viola in K.174 takes up an independent line almost from the outset, repeating an octave lower the eleven-bar phrase with which the violin begins, over a bustling accompaniment of quavers by both second strings. This phrase contains the triple turn on the dominant with first grace-note sharpened, which occurs in the string trio and the Quartet in C (slow movements), and is exploited with so much ingenuity by Beethoven in 'La Malinconia', Op. 18, No. 6. What is equally interesting, and I think without a parallel, is that it ends with a cadence



which is at once echoed by the viola, the whole recurring in the reprise, so that it occurs four times in the movement, and not only there but also in the second and fourth movements—twelve times in all. The same cadence may be found also in the splendid aria "L'amerò, sarò costante", in 'Il Rè pastore', as well as in the *Allegro* of the Quartet in D minor, K.421, and may be recognized in the slow movement of the horn Quintet, K.407. The two following themes go to the first violin, as also the third, which is echoed by the second violin. Then comes a fourth, decidedly reminiscent of the 'Exultate' motet, in which it is the violas who are echoed by the violins, both groups playing in thirds.

The slow movement opens with all five voices in unison, after which follows a series of six echoes between first violin and viola, which is repeated in the reprise. In the minuet the air (based on the figure



familiar from the accompaniment to "But thou didst not leave" in Handel's 'Messiah', and from the closing bars of 'The Magic Flute') is again handed about from violin to viola. This is perhaps Mozart's most witty and "catchy" minuet. In the trio the first violin and viola are answered by their seconds. J. A. Westrup, who considers the Quintet "prentice work", comments on this procedure as "a wasteful use of five instruments, since it could be done almost equally well with three." But *almost* the best was never quite good enough for Mozart.

The finale, after opening with a phrase by the violins in thirds, breaks into a dashing *fugato*, the order being viola, violin, second viola, second violin, cello. The first two chase each other's tails to the end of the movement, the rest bringing up the rear. The twelve-times-repeated phrase falls at its last entry to the second strings. In the earlier movements the cello occupied a back seat, for Mozart's mastery of it was a plant of later growth ; but it takes a full share of the fun in this finale. In the interest of the part-writing the whole quintet represents an unquestionable advance on earlier chamber-music compositions. Indeed, a glance at the scores should suffice to satisfy any one (*pace* Hadow) that in this youthful work Mozart has given the violas parts of greater independence than those assigned to them by Beethoven in his great Op. 29 ('Storm') Quintet in C.

K.174 is at present only procurable in Vol. II of Peters's Mozart Quintets—a volume which should be in the hands of all string parties, if only because it makes the clarinet Quintet available to them in the guise of a string Quintet as well as in its proper form.

2. '*Sinfonia concertante*' for Violin and Viola, in E flat, K.364, composed in 1779 at the age of 23.

"A beautiful, dark-coloured work", says one critic, "in which passion seems to smoulder under a perfectly decorous style and exquisite proportions". It occupies a remarkable, indeed a unique, position, for it is the first work by any composer of first-class rank to introduce the viola to the concert platform as an independent instrument ; and it can hardly be said to have had any successors, until in recent years the viola, thanks mainly to Lionel Tertis, came at last into its kingdom. It is the only concert work in which violin and viola are exploited by contrast. To Mozart, with his infallible flair for tonal values and for the genius of individual instruments, its composition must have been a highly congenial task. Further, this concerto (which a leading musical critic has termed "a succession of Mozartian commonplaces") contains what appear to be the first instances—ante-dating by nearly six years the famous *Dissonanzen* Quartet—of Mozart's use of discords—fierce crashing discords too, all the more arresting in that only two voices are engaged.

It is unlucky that we know nothing of the provenance of this work. We may conjecture that Mozart had only recently taken to the viola, lacking perhaps the leisure, while engrossed in the composition of his first great opera, to maintain his violin technique ; that impressed by its peculiar qualities and resolved to give it a chance of exhibiting them, he turned over in his mind the project

of a viola concerto, but rejected it in favour of one in which violin and viola should vie in displaying by contrast each other's beauties ; that he got his father and some musical friends to try it over with him in private ; that its sombre and sometimes fierce character alarmed and repelled them ; and that it was incontinently written off as impossible. All this, though possibly good enough to pass for history with some of his lady biographers, can only be pure guess-work. We know that the standard of viola playing was low at the time : if Mozart, with that strange callousness of genius which he displayed to his own creations (though never to his friends) lost interest in the work himself, it was unlikely that another violist would take it up ; for it is anything but easy, even when played as directed by Mozart in the key of D, with the strings tuned a semitone up. But we shall never know when it was first performed, or by whom.

The 'Sinfonia concertante' is not cast in the concerto form which Mozart developed later, for it opens with a *tutti* which is no *ritornello*, as it adumbrates none of the themes to follow. (This *tutti*, by the way, besides bearing a striking resemblance in its general layout to the opening of the violin Concerto in A, has in its twenty-sixth bar an unmistakable quotation from its last movement.) Like the Quintet we have been discussing, it is a study in antiphony, but antiphony of a different and subtler kind. In the Quintet short phrases are merely echoed ; here too they are repeated, but always with a difference.

The 'Sinfonia' is not, like the compositions of Mozart's last years, governed by any ideal of thematic unity. On the contrary, it is highly polythematic. In its general outline it may be said to consist mainly of a series of short binary themes, of which the first part is played by one instrument and the second by the other. In the first movement there are five principal themes : the first is given out by both in unison, and the fourth is in thirds, while the others are treated antiphonally. In the reprise, the third is omitted, and also the fifth, the most romantic and dramatic of all, which has a curious affinity with the Watchman episode in Mendelssohn's 'Hymn of Praise'. This last theme is followed by a perfect fusillade of dialogue, in which the exchanges are so deftly dovetailed into each other that the ear can with difficulty distinguish between the voices. There are twenty-four bars of this, containing thirty-five interchanges. Throughout this and all the movements the two instruments are treated with complete impartiality. Even when they run in harmony, the viola as often as not leads, playing a sixth below the violin. It is difficult to imagine how any music could be

more *dialogué* than this. Analysis shows that of this movement (excluding *tutti* passages) 72 per cent is dialogue (running occasionally into canon) while in the second and third the proportions are 70 and 68. The balance consists of harmony, mostly in thirds or sixths.

The *Andante* is in C minor, a key in which Mozart has always something impressive to say. A short *tutti* announces the theme in its simplest form ; it is then repeated, first by the violin and then by the viola, each time more richly decorated. The contrast between the effect of this air (so artfully devised to show off the beauty of viola tone) on the violin's D string and on the viola's G is one that cannot be expressed by epithets. It is worthy of remark that the opening notes of the theme as given by the solo instruments are identical with the reiterated figure of the viola variation in the last movement of the clarinet Quintet. The rest of the movement up to the reprise consists of interchanges between the soloists, culminating in some striking and elaborate canon-writing. In the reprise Mozart gives the lie to critics who have said that in a Mozart recapitulation everything can be foreseen. The theme assumes almost at once an entirely new form, returning to its original lines only in time to repeat the canon passages. Then comes the cadenza, starting with another canon, of which the five bars after the first begin with the following chords : C over D, D over C, D over E $\flat$ , E $\flat$  over D, E $\flat$  over F. Nothing quite like this recurs in Mozart until his two last quintets. It is easy to imagine how this strange and stern, if inspiriting, music must have startled Leopold and his amiable circle. The methods used are to-day no longer unfamiliar, but the power of this extraordinarily effective cadenza remains untouched by the vagaries of musical fashion.

Players will find the last movement one of the most exhilarating in all music. It has in it a quality of *αἰόλον*—something not so much Austrian (far less German) as Greek. After a *tutti*, which this time anticipates the second subject, violin and viola alternately give out the first and second sections of the theme, and then break into an interchange of short triplet figures, relieved by a canon, and a long passage in thirds. The latter introduces a dramatic *calando*, with a twice-repeated drop of a fifth, ending on a chord of the leading-note over the subdominant, which is held in suspense for three bars before resolving on the tonic. In place of a cadenza the soloists in turn have a coda beginning with triplets of the common chord, identical at first with the trumpet fanfare in the accompaniment of "Non più andrai", but rising four octaves from the viola's lowest to the violin's highest E $\flat$ .

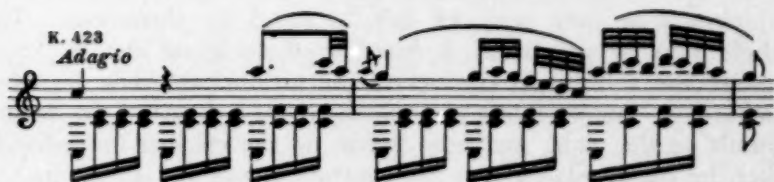


3. *Duos in G and B $\flat$  for Violin and Viola, K.423-424, written in 1783 at the age of 27.*

Whatever may be the truth about K.174, there is no doubt that we owe these Duos to Michael Haydn—not, however, to any merit of his, but to an engaging weakness; for his fatal fondness for festivity incapacitated him from carrying out a commission for his patron, and he was obliged to assign it to his obliging friend. Both Haydns as well as Spohr and several lesser men wrote for this combination; but their efforts are now one with Nineveh and Tyre, and Mozart's alone survive.

These Duos constitute a perfect example of the paradox that Mozart is hardest to play when the technical difficulties are slightest. Though superficially easy, they demand faultless intonation and absolute clarity of style.

The writing for the two instruments in these Duos does not lend itself, like that of K.364, to classification and analysis. In most of the movements harmony and antiphony alternate or are combined in an inextricable blend. There are few runs of simple thirds; instead, the parts appear to the eye to move independently, the one persisting principle being that where a theme appears twice, the instruments take the chief part alternately. In the *Allegro* of the Duo in G, the freedom and ease with which the two voices move, and the fullness and richness resulting from the meagre means employed might be called amazing, if that unfortunate word retained any of its former significance. The *Adagio*, as splendid a slow movement as Mozart ever composed, specializes in contrasting the timbres of the instruments, as may be seen in this passage, among others, in which they are separated by intervals so great that their notes can only with difficulty be shown in the same clef:



The effect of this viola accompaniment, with its insistent reiteration of the open C string, followed by higher chords through which, if clearly fingered, the C can still be heard resounding, is most striking; and it is one that is peculiar to the viola, as the length of the strings of the cello and their longer vibration intervals put it outside the range of the possibilities of that instrument.

The principal theme of the succeeding rondo is not one of Mozart's very best ; but the movement is beautifully composed, containing canon passages of extreme ingenuity, and is thoroughly enjoyable playing.

It is not altogether easy to follow Abert, great though his authority is, in his account of the Duo in B $\flat$ , which he pronounces more "showy" than the other. The slow introduction he regards as a sign of adaptation to the style of M. Haydn : this seems an unnecessary inference, having regard to similar introductions in the E $\flat$  Symphony, the Quartet in C, the Quintets in D and G minor, the Quintet for piano and winds, and elsewhere. The *Allegro* is a delightful piece of diversified part-writing. The waving figure in which the viola accompanies the violin, the rippling runs of quavers in the second subject, the shifting modulations of the development section, the artful canon passages, the thrice-repeated chords (based again on the viola's low C) which close each part of the movement, and the coda which echoes those chords in the upper register of both instruments combine to make this movement a special favourite with players. By way of contrast, the *Andante cantabile* which follows is a florid and romantic violin solo over a double-stopping accompaniment—an entirely new departure. The last movement, consisting of variations, is no doubt the "showy" one ; though containing much interesting writing in counterpoint, it is perhaps rather less attractive than the other movements.

4. *Clarinet Trio in E $\flat$ , K.498* ; written in 1786 at the age of 30.

The composer himself was the violist at the first performance of this work, which introduces a new aspect of the viola. Abert's comments on the Trio in Cobbett are such acute as well as witty criticism that they may be left to stand by themselves. The whole Trio, he points out, is based on the original idea of "harnessing the voluptuous clarinet to the melancholy viola". After noting how "quarrelsome and rebellious" the theme of the *Andante* sounds on the viola, and how ardent on the clarinet immediately after, he comments on how the contrast in timbres is exploited in the minuet-trio, where the sighs of the clarinet "elicit a peevish response in triplets from the viola"—somewhat, he might have added, in the spirit of the gruff opening of Beethoven's Quartet in F minor, Op. 95. In the C minor episode of the finale, the viola "airs its bad temper once more", till at last "the movement reaches a brilliant close, and clarinet and viola march side by side in perfect amity."

5. *The four great Quintets :*

In C, K.515, written in 1787 at the age of 31.

In G minor, K.516, written in 1787 at the age of 31.

In D, K.593, written in 1790 at the age of 34.

In E $\flat$ , K.614, written in 1791 at the age of 35.

There is no room for difference of opinion as to the inexhaustible splendour of these quintets. It seems unaccountable therefore that in spite of the increase of Mozart's popularity, none but the G minor, the most uneven if also the most arresting of the four, is at all well known. It is perhaps permissible to wonder what percentage of those who pronounce the G minor Mozart's masterwork have ever heard any of the other quintets. When the last two were played in London several years back by Isolde Menges's party, they were apparently new to most of the audience and even to some of the critics who reviewed them in the newspapers. As to the question of their relative merits, a recent English biographer puts the E $\flat$  in the first place ; it is altogether outside the ken of Aulich and Heimeran, who speak of the C major with enthusiasm ; the latter in turn is unluckily passed over altogether both in Alfred Bacharach's 'Musical Companion' and in the catalogue of Mozart's works heading Abert's Mozart article in Cobbett. The wisest attitude to take up is perhaps that of the undergraduate who, when asked by his examiners to name the Minor Prophets, declined the responsibility of discriminating between such holy persons.

The methods employed by Mozart in the quintets have more than once been described as setting against each other a light and a dark body of strings, the middle instrument being common to both. This is of course true of the first movement of the G minor, where its effect is intensely moving and dramatic. It is also the procedure in the most exciting part of the slow movement of the D major. But it is by no means the universal or even usual plan, and other combinations of the five voices are on the whole more common. In the first movement of the C major, for instance (as also in the *Larghetto* introduction to the D major), the first violin and the cello maintain a dialogue against a semi-tremolo background supplied by the inner voices. In the second subject of the movement the violins first and then the violas alternate in sparkling runs of thirds, which extend over twenty bars. In the finale of the C major and the second *Adagio* of the G minor, the four lower voices are opposed to the first violin's *concertante* part. Almost every possible combination of pairs is used in the minuet of the Quintet in C. In the *Andante*, a movement of quite incomparable beauty, the first viola begins as a sort of free-lance, supplying a running commentary on the violin's

theme, but soon takes over the second theme from him. The rest resolves itself into a duet on purely antiphonal lines, though the part-writing for the subordinate voices, and particularly the second viola, is only one degree if at all less masterly. The exquisite five-bar coda which crowns the movement is equally *dialogué*. Three times the first viola puts the same question, in grave but searching tones; and the violins and the second viola reply, each time in different terms. Finally the question is repeated for the last time by the first violin, who himself supplies the perfect and conclusive answer. In the first movement of the G minor, the violas are almost as prominent as in the C major; but in the minuet they are kept subordinate until the end of the trio, when they give out together in thirds their peculiarly forlorn and desolate little coda. The main *Adagio* is an equally effective and affecting composition; but the part-writing is less interesting than that in the corresponding movement of the C major.

The last movement has always been, and will always remain, a mystery. The almost unbearable sadness of what has preceded it seems to demand for its resolution something heroic—more like the finale of the 'Jupiter' Symphony. Instead, we are offered an airy waltz tune, which even in a more congenial context would appear to be scored with less than Mozart's usual infallible grace. The booming bass notes of the cello and the thick scoring of the inner voices on the off-beats produce an effect which contrasts unfavourably with that of the accompaniment of an air which is remarkably similar in shape, in the string Trio, K.563. The contrast is obvious to the eye when the two are shown in juxtaposition:



(Viola and cello parts in K.563 an octave lower.)

That there are great beauties in this movement goes without saying: it is by Mozart. But it comes nearer failure than anything else he wrote in his prime.



Recent writers have shown that Mozart's latest works are characterized by a striving towards unity which gives them added clarity and power, not altogether without some compensatory loss of sensuous appeal and melodic interest. The first and last movements of the Quintet in D, while splendidly compact and glowing with fiery vigour, have less thematic variety than some of his slighter works; and there is nothing of special interest in the inner parts. It is in the *Adagio* of this Quintet that the light and dark bodies of strings are massed against each other, as we have seen before; but this is only temporary, and for the most part the inner voices are united in a semi-tremolo triplet accompaniment to a dialogue between violin and cello, in which great play is made of the contrast between the slow dropping figures of the violin and the brisk rising ones of the cello. Then follows the most Mozartian of all minuets. The chief feature of its first section is the astounding piece of virtuosity with which it closes, the lower voices following the violins at an interval of one crotchet only in a five-bar canon of the opening theme. Like all Mozart's *tours-de-force*, it comes off with a deceptive appearance of being as easy as winking. In the trio, the first violin has a series of arpeggios over nearly three octaves, answered by a dipping figure from the second violin which irresistibly suggests a curtsy, over a *pizzicato* by the others, who shortly take turns at the arpeggios themselves.

In the first movement of the E $\flat$  Quintet, the violas lead off with a figure containing a thrice-repeated shake. This figure, which permeates the whole movement, being tossed about from one instrument to another by way of question and answer, is one which calls for exceptional finger agility at the rapid tempo set. Actually the first violin has seventy shakes to do in the movement, and the first viola thirty-six. The movement is dominated by the dark tones of the violas. In the *Andante*, in B $\flat$ , which superficially resembles the *Romanze* of the 'Kleine Nachtmusik', the relations between the voices shift and change with kaleidoscopic rapidity. After the first subject has been stated there is a quick modulation to the key of F, when it is restated by the second violin, accompanied by the first (by way of descant) with a new and unexpected theme borrowed from the fourth movement of the string Trio K.563. The *Andante* gathers as it proceeds power and intensity totally alien to the gentle *Romanze* which at first it had promised to resemble. There is a succession of *sforzando* discords, C- B $\flat$ - A $\flat$ - G : A- G- F- E $\flat$  : G- F- E $\flat$ - D, which have been referred to as foreshadowed in the 'Sinfonia concertante'. The movement ends with a return to the first subject, which is now copiously festooned in every part with

triple turns, as many as three to the bar. The "dæmonic element" of Mozart is here strongly in evidence: the music, while never violent, is charged with immense power.

The minuet is hardly such a striking one as the last, but the distribution of parts in it is interesting. They are paired in succession, and the order of the pairing goes thus: 1 and 2, 2 and 3, 1 and 2, 3 and 4, *da capo*. In the trio the first violin delivers a *Ländler* tune, which on the repeat is doubled by the first viola, while the cello groans an E $\flat$  incessantly. The *allegro* finale is a close-knit and masterful movement comprising much contrapuntal and antiphonal writing, especially between the three upper parts; several instances of treatment of themes by inversion; and at least one more dissonant chord.

The quintet form—and indeed the quartet too—is obviously of too large dimensions to be completely *dialogué* in all its parts throughout. The greatest number of voices which can be so handled is three; and for the complete and flawless specimen of "dialoguism" we must turn to

6. *The Divertimento in E $\flat$  for String Trio, K.563*, written in 1788 at the age of 32.

Few indeed are the chamber-music works to which one can listen without an uneasy feeling that they contain here and there notes which do not count and could quite comfortably be left out. In this Trio there is not a single one that is superfluous. The viola's central position makes his part more than ever one of vital responsibility. The tension is greater than with four or five voices, and as the work is at Mozart's very highest level, the enjoyment in performance is proportionately keener.

The voices are handled with complete equality and with an entire absence of soloism or purple patches for individuals; nor does the number of voices admit of groups being balanced against each other, as in the larger combinations. There is therefore not much that calls for special comment from the viola's point of view. One exception is the *maggiore* section of the fourth movement, an unusual and original episode, where the viola is assigned a slow-moving subject of the austere simplicity, played *forte* between accompaniments of demi-semiquavers by the violin and semiquavers by the cello. Ultimately the demi-semiquavers pass first to the viola and then to the cello, leading into a six-bar coda which transfigures the opening theme of the movement in the form of a canon between violin and cello. In the first trio of the second minuet, again, the viola takes the lead, apparently for the sake of balance and impartiality,

as each of the upper voices has a part that would normally go to the other ; and in the coda it is the viola which clinches the argument. The viola's part in the finale<sup>(1)</sup> has already been mentioned in connection with the G minor Quintet. Is it not possible, if not probable, that Mozart on second thoughts confessed the disappointing nature of the Quintet's last movement and wrote this finale to show how much better a similar movement could be scored in trio form ? The part-writing here seems to be modelled very closely on the duet " Che soave zeffiretto " in ' Figaro ' ; even the semi-quaver figure given to the words " il capirà " is faithfully reproduced in the viola part. However that may be, the viola's accompaniment to the opening theme, with its sixty-eight rising triplet figures, is the perfect answer to a problem which was not happily solved in the Quintet. There is a dramatic episode in the development section, where the viola is given the principal air in A♭ major, modulating to A♭ minor, G and C minor, while the violin takes over the triplet accompaniment.

It is an elusive and ambiguous finale. At first hearing it appears gay and light-hearted, but further experience reveals it as shot through with a wistful sadness—hardly the mood one would expect from a man whom hope had deserted, and who was hunted to desperation by necessity of the most sordid kind. He seems to say, " Life is drawing to a close ; but how rich and beautiful it has been ! " And since to Mozart life was music and nothing else, who shall say that he was wrong ? So far from being a failure, as Mr. Ernest Newman would have us believe, his life, judged by the only standards the artist can admit, attained that supreme measure of fulfilment to which worldly success is for ever an insuperable bar. The contrast between the carefree insouciance of some of Mozart's later works and the hopelessness of his circumstances is a paradox only to those whose philosophy of life prevents them from understanding that standards of judgment which may be applicable to a Rossini or a Wagner have no relevance to an artist of the stature of Mozart. Yet even if it is conceded that he attained such a measure of true success as has seldom if ever been the lot of mortal man, still his name is one which will always be associated with sadness ; and the instrument most richly expressive of the aura surrounding his memory will be the sombre dark-hued viola which he loved so well.

<sup>(1)</sup> Half the beauty of this movement is lost if it is taken, as it usually is, at breakneck speed. The prevalent idea that *allegro* with Mozart is faster than with other composers is in conflict with his own directions—see Holmes's ' Life of Mozart ' (Everyman edition, p. 248).

## WHEN RAVEL COMPOSED TO ORDER

BY M. D. CALVOCORESSI

ÉMILE VUILLERMOZ's essay in 'Maurice Ravel par quelques-uns de ses familiers' begins with the remark: "il ne faut pas songer à rendre explicable la psychologie de cet artiste d'exception." Most other writers on Ravel are less cautious. Almost everyone of those who have tried their hand at turning out portraits of him as man and artist start on the assumption that there was something unusual and mysterious in his mental make-up, and strive hard to define this mysterious something and to show it reflected in his music. They posit that, instead of sitting down to compose whenever the impulse or decision to do so came to him in the normal course of things, he required, as often as not, some stimulus of a special order—usually a peculiar and novel problem to solve; and the more peculiar and novel the better, he being supposed to prefer the line of greater resistance.

Often they stress his artificiality, his interest in artifices both technical and æsthetic. Roland-Manuel entitled an essay (afterwards incorporated in his book) 'Ravel ou l'esthétique de l'imposture'. In V. Jankélévitch's book a section is entitled 'Artifice,' another 'Les Masques'. A not uncommon topic is: "le plaisir qu'il prit toujours à se plier aux nécessités d'un jeu dont une volonté antagoniste a tracé les règles". There is a modicum of truth in these views, especially the last. Ravel's imagination responded readily to challenges to his resourcefulness and ingenuity. Still, Jankélévitch surely overshoots the mark when he argues, in order to illustrate the point:

Il affecte volontiers d'écrire sur commande: composer sur un thème donné, voilà son fort et sa grande coquetterie.

The very word "affecte" is puzzling; how, one asks, could composing to order ever become an affectation? And, apart from that, how can an inquiry into the circumstances of the case justify the implied conclusion?

It is true that a big proportion of Ravel's output consists of works commissioned or composed in compliance with outside suggestions or requests; how big a proportion one hardly realizes



until one starts counting. But, obviously, one should begin by drawing a distinction. It would be absurd to include in a list compiled for the purpose of special pleading works that were turned out to order in the normal course of business: as when he was asked to compose a piano prelude for a sight-reading competition at the Conservatoire (1913), to contribute a 'Vocalise' to Hettich's collection of exercises for singers (1907), when Diaghilev commissioned 'Daphnis et Chloé' (1909), or Rouché, the director of the Paris Opéra, offered him the libretto 'L'Enfant et les sortilèges' (1924-5). The 'Don Quichotte à Dulcinée' songs were prepared for the well-known film in which Shaliapin appeared (the producer applied, it came out, to several composers besides Ravel, and a peculiar imbroglio ensued, Ravel eventually suing the company for damages). All these were straightforward commissions, entailing no special condition or problem. The same is true of the 'Fanfare' for the ballet 'L'Éventail de Jeanne' (1927), the prelude composed for Canudo's 'Poèmes du Vardar' (1919), the song 'Manteau de fleurs' (1903) and the casting into ballet form of 'Ma Mère l'Oye' and 'Valses nobles et sentimentales'. Remains to see how many other works could—even by stretching a point—be adduced in support of the "volonté antagoniste" thesis, or of Jankélévitch's.

In 1904 the Paris 'Weekly Critical Review' opened a competition for "a first movement of a piano sonatina, length not to exceed 75 bars". At my suggestion Ravel entered the competition, which was cancelled because his was the only entry, and it consisted of 77 bars. He completed the Sonatina later.

That same year, at my request, he composed accompaniments for Greek folksongs to be used as illustrations for a lecture by Pierre Aubry; and, the following year, another batch for lectures of my own. Five of these were published. It may be held that to devise accompaniments for these songs set no special problem; but one sees that it did (though maybe not to the extent of justifying special pleading) as soon as one realizes how great an advance on anything of the kind done before—even including Bourgault-Ducoudray's 'Trente Mélodies populaires de Grèce et d'Orient'—his treatment of them embodied. The unobtrusive, subtle accompaniments accord not only with the modal but also with the æsthetic character of the tunes. They suggest the atmosphere so aptly that vocal part and instrumental part seem to have grown together. I can think of no earlier example of so thorough and felicitous a fusion, all the more remarkable considering that he had never turned his mind to folksongs before, and that he did the work at

very short notice. A subsidiary proof of its thoroughness is that several writers have been misled, despite the unambiguous title 'Chansons populaires grecques', into believing that he had composed both tunes and accompaniments; notably Jankélévitch ('Ravel', pp. 115 and 119; 'Fauré', p. 236, footnote), Chalupt ('Revue Musicale', April 1925, p. 71) and Mirambel (*ibid.* December 1939, p. 112).

A sequel to, and in all likelihood a direct consequence of, his first venture was that in 1910 Ravel took part in the competition organized by the Moscow 'Maison du lied' for folksong settings. Four of his seven entries won first prizes. In 1914 he did the two Jewish songs, 'Kaddisch' and 'L'Énigme éternelle'.

All this is quite in the normal order of things; and the same may be said with regard to the Septet of 1906, whose true title is 'Introduction et Allegro pour harpe avec accompagnement de quatuor à cordes, flute et clarinette'. At that time there was a certain amount of competition between the traditional harp, whose principal manufacturer was Érard, and the Pleyel chromatic harp invented by Gustave Lyon. Pleyels were commissioning music for chromatic harp—thus it was that Caplet's 'Conte fantastique' for harp and string quartet came into being—and Érards in turn started on a similar policy. Ravel's Septet and Fauré's Impromptu op. 86 were commissioned by them.

In 1920 Ravel was asked to contribute to the musical album 'Le Tombeau de Debussy', issued by the 'Revue Musicale' as a supplement to its Debussy memorial number. So were Dukas, Roussel, Satie, Schmitt, Bartók, Falla, Goossens, Malipiero and Stravinsky. That his contribution took the form of an *Allegro* for violin and cello (it became the first movement of his Sonata, finished in 1922) is neither here nor there: the special problem set by this unusual instrumental combination was of his own devising. Maybe he was acquainted at the time with Kodály's duet for the same combination, composed in 1914, although not published until 1922. He was keenly interested in Kodály's music.

Again, the special problem tackled in 'Boléro' (to compose, he explained to me, a work that would be just a long continuous *crescendo* on a commonplace motif, without any kind of working-out, 'dix-sept minutes d'orchestre sans musique') was not suggested from without. The work was done in fulfilment of a commission from Ida Rubinstein; but what she had asked him to do (these particulars were given by J. J. Nin in the December 1938 'Revue Musicale') was to orchestrate for her parts of Albeniz's 'Iberia'. This turned out not to be possible, the exclusive right to do so

having been granted to Arbós. So Ravel conceived the notion of composing 'Boléro' instead.

'La Valse', written for Diaghilev in 1920, need not be taken into account: Ravel had planned it years before. It is mentioned in a letter of 1914 (Roland-Manuel, 'Ravel', p. 127). All that Diaghilev did was to ask Ravel to carry out the plan. His failure to redeem his promise to produce the work led to a violent quarrel.

In 1925 Ravel was asked by Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge to compose a song-set with, if possible, flute, cello and piano accompaniment. He agreed, and six months later had completed the 'Chansons madécasses'. Here at last we have a work that can really be adduced in support of Jankélévitch's view. The special setting was definitely an outside suggestion. Yet let it be marked that the idea was very similar to one by which he had been attracted twelve years before, without outside prompting: that of composing songs—'Trois poèmes de Mallarmé'—with accompanying miniature orchestra, which was suggested by Stravinsky's describing to him Schoenberg's 'Pierrot lunaire' and showing him his own 'Poésies de la lyrique japonaise'. And, although the 'Poèmes de Mallarmé' were not commissioned, he finished them speedily (March–August 1913).

And now for two little works that were actually composed on given themes in the narrowest sense of the term. In 1924 the 'Revue Musicale' invited a number of Fauré's pupils to contribute, for a musical supplement to a special Fauré number, pieces composed on a theme derived from the letters forming the master's name by the expedient of carrying on the alphabetical nomenclature (not in its German form, in which B stands for B♭, and B♭ is H) further through several octaves, H being A, I being B, and so on.<sup>(1)</sup> Ravel responded with a 'Berceuse' for violin and piano. Characteristically, he improved upon the prescribed condition by using Fauré's Christian name too. Of course, it would be absurd to use the 'Berceuse' as evidence in support of special pleading unless one is prepared to do the same with regard to all the other composers who also accepted to contribute to the supplement: Louis Aubert, Enesco, Kœchlin, Ladmirault, Roger-Ducasse and Florent Schmitt. And the same applies to the 'Menuet' he contributed in 1909 to a music supplement, 'Hommage à Haydn', of the monthly 'S.I.M.', the given theme being derived from the name 'Haydn' according to a similar peculiar principle—invented for the occasion, if I remember aright, by the editor of that periodical, Écorcheville.

<sup>(1)</sup> Jankélévitch, unaware (or oblivious) of this fact, says: "Quelle idée saugrenue que d'employer le cher nom de Gabriel Fauré à la notation d'une Berceuse!"

Another contribution by request to a 'Hommage' supplement was the song 'Ronsard à son âme', for the special Ronsard number of the 'Revue Musicale'. No special condition had been suggested.

Remains to mention 'Tzigane' for violin and orchestra, composed in 1924 for Jelly d'Arányi, the special conditions being that this should be in the style of a Hungarian rhapsody, with plenty of opportunities for virtuosity; and the piano Concerto for left hand only, commissioned by Paul Wittgenstein (1930-31).

Nothing of all this goes very far towards substantiating Jan-kélévitch. My own feeling is that these requests and commissions, apart from suggesting to him, now and then, some special problem that otherwise might not have occurred to him, had a definite influence on him, but that there is no need to go so far afield in order to define and explain it. The plain truth is that they made his output greater than it would have been had he always been left to his own devices. He could work fast if necessary, but he was not a quick worker. He inclined to keep thinking things out for a long time before giving them shape. He was extremely scrupulous and made it a rule "never to release a work until he felt sure he had done his utmost by it".

There is also a story of his childhood told by Ricardo Viñes ('Revue Musicale', December 1938) that reveals a character trait which should not be overlooked. Apparently he was disinclined to practise the piano; and in order to overcome this reluctance, his mother hit upon the expedient of giving him 30 centimes (three pence) for every hour of practice—the same rate of pay as the charwoman's. So it is natural that later the feeling that the labourer was worthy of his hire should have carried weight with him.

But the main point remains that for him a promise to deliver was absolutely binding.<sup>(2)</sup> When, in 1905, the firm of Durand

<sup>(2)</sup> One cannot help contrasting his attitude with Debussy's, whom, it would seem, commissions (except for 'Saint-Sébastien' and 'Jeux', which he carried out swiftly) put out and even irritated. The tone of his references, in his letters to friends, to the commission he had accepted in 1904 from Mrs. Elise Hall for a saxophone rhapsody is characteristic. To *Messenger*:

La ténacité des Américains est proverbiale, et la dame au saxophone est débarquée à Paris, me demandant des nouvelles de son morceau.

To Pierre Louÿs:

Étant donné que cette *Fantaisie* est commandée, payée, et mangée depuis plus d'un an, il me semble que je suis en retard.

And to Durand (September 1905):

Mme E. Hall, la *Femme-Saxophone*, me réclame poliment sa fantaisie; je voudrais bien la contenter, car elle mérite une récompense pour sa patience.

In 1911 only he turned out a rough sketch, which was all Mrs. Hall ever received from him. This was set in order and finished by Roger-Ducasse in 1919. Debussy was no less casual with 'Khamma', a little ballet commissioned in 1911 by Maud Allan, which he outlined and then handed over for completion to Charles Kœchlin. It was published in 1916 only, and Maud Allan never used it.



offered him a contract binding him to give them the first refusal of all his works to come in consideration of an annuity of 12,000 francs (£480—the same sum as they were giving Debussy) by way of advance on publishing rights, the amount of those rights to be decided in common in each case, Ravel preferred, he explained to me, an annuity of 6,000 francs only, so as not to risk feeling compelled to turn out a greater amount of music.

But there can be no doubt that a certain amount of compulsion was all to the good. Indeed I have often thought of the many works he planned while in the heyday of his power, and might well have carried out had inducement been forthcoming. Of these two at least would have been of outstanding importance: the opera 'Don Quichotte', of which he kept thinking for years, and the setting of Maeterlinck's 'Intérieur', which would have led him to explore a province never touched by him—that of introspective, psychological drama.

Such is, it seems to me, the only conclusion that can justifiably be derived from the facts as they stand—a very simple one. But, after all, why should we insist on discovering a complex one? What reasons have we for assuming that his mental make-up was so singular and mysterious as to invite roundabout, far-fetched comments on what he did and how he did it? Even admitting that Ravel the man lived a complex inner life beneath the uneventful outer life which he led, partly by choice and partly owing to circumstances, we should never forget that as a musician he was first and last an artisan. Whence his interest in special problems, in new resources that provided him with opportunities to exercise his craftsmanship in fresh directions. That this was, for him, purely and simply a matter of technique is made clear by Jankélévitch's shrewd remark:

Les styles nouveaux, on dirait qu'ils éveillent en lui plus de curiosité technique que de réceptivité, modifiant son écriture mais non point son langage, laissant pour toute trace ici un accord, là tel artifice d'instrumentation ou telle particularité d'orthographe . . . Ravel demeure jalousement insaisissable.

In other words, the main thing was for the technical notions concerning form or texture to come to him—whether from within or from without did not matter in the least.

## TOVEY'S TEACHING

BY W. B. WORDSWORTH

WITH THREE LETTERS FROM THE LATE SIR DONALD TOVEY

It is almost impossible to convey in writing the profound affection and respect which contact with Tovey produced in his students. I studied composition with him for a few terms at Edinburgh, and it has never been my good fortune to meet any one whose mind and soul seemed so to dwarf all other views of music and of life as did his. One felt one knew for the first time what words like "genius" and "greatness" really meant, when one had been in his company. Needless to say, to have one's compositions criticized by him was a humiliating process, for his power of concentration, of seeing that every note should be in its right and inevitable place, was simply amazing. He judged everything one brought to him by the highest standard, and not much survived that test. But it was the finest training in self-criticism that it was possible to have.

His method of teaching composition—though he always maintained that composition is a subject that never can be taught—was to try to awaken in his students a feeling for "normality" (in the sense explained in the letters that follow), as shown in the works of the great masters. Here are a few notes taken almost at random from his composition classes :

There is nothing worse than getting accustomed to works of art. As you get more experienced you will see the possible differences in your theme ; until then you need many themes in each work. Hence the fact that young composers generally use a great many themes in each work. Don't worry about contrast of *themes*, it is contrast of *movement* that matters.

In your transition it is better to be crudely dramatic than to fall into the lyric trap. All Beethoven's early transitions are very clever. But if you get rid of your dominant preparation in one place it will come back in another, like nature and the pitchfork. Any lyric idea that is to go into sonata form must have "open ends". It is much more difficult to prevent your second group from closing up than your first.

All theoretical explanation is being wise after the event.

What one needs to learn in composition is how to write a transition, how to get from one place to another, how to throw the key

of the second group into relief, and let the tonic sink below the horizon.

The first thing to realize about writing a slow movement is the danger that it will move too slowly. But if you are *conscious* of this danger you can do what you like, as Beethoven did in the Sonata Op. 31 in D minor.

But "The Professor" as he was generally called, always insisted that music is *one* subject, not the many into which it is divided for purposes of teaching and examination. So that though the classes might be in orchestration or history or interpretation, yet all the while one was learning about "Music". The following notes were made at the history and analysis class, but I think that often they throw a wonderfully clear light on composition and interpretation :

The up-to-date is soon the out-of-date.

Students' mistakes recapitulate the experiments of primitive pioneers.

You must get as clear an idea of the *whole* of a composition as of any individual moment or phrase.

Recapitulation is like seeing with two eyes what you have previously seen with only one—it becomes solid.

You find out what form your idea will take by trial and error, and don't be afraid of the error. Regard an art form as you would a biological form.

Science has to make theories that are too small for the world, so that it can get outside them to criticize ; but a work of art is such that what is outside it does not matter. Art suggests that the universe is infinite, for art is a type of infinity.

The time-dimension in music is not measured by the clock, *i.e.* a *rit.* will not make a phrase that is too short by a bar sound long enough, and *vice versa*.

Infinity is more easily recognized in an epic (*e.g.* a Bach toccata) than in a dramatic work (*e.g.* a Beethoven sonata). But the easiest is not necessarily the greatest example.

Don't *avoid* your full closes, as young composers are sometimes advised to do, but *undermine* them.

Infinity doesn't go on for ever, it is a very positive thing. Anyone can see that a Bach fugue is a continuum, but in the dramatic style you have to listen longer to get the pattern of the whole than in the polyphonic style.

Counterpoint is the statement of harmony in the form of a combination of melodies.

Until you know the music of the sixteenth century you are like a classical scholar who knows no Greek.

The piano is not an instrument of percussion, but of suggestion.

It does not matter much whether you recognize that one theme is derived from another or not ; what does matter is the proportions that result.

Don't be so keen on surprises in your work that the biggest surprise is when you talk sense !

An arpeggio theme will not develop, it just disappears. So if your first theme is an arpeggio, you will need a good many others, as in the 'Eroica.'

You must keep a clear distinction in your mind between such things as exposition and thematic transformation and development, for development consists in making phrases of a different length out of the original themes.

The metaphor of the "Main Stream"<sup>(1)</sup> is useful in that it suggests a distinction between itself and the "backwaters". One must also distinguish between the "Main Stream" and the "centre". The centre of Western music is vocal counterpoint. The contrapuntal view of music is more stimulating than the harmonic. You gain much insight into music by thinking of inexplicable chords like the F, B, D#, G# in 'Tristan' as contrapuntal phenomena. You don't get the Main Stream until it has passed through several towns and acquired some sewage. Popularity has some considerable influence on the Main Stream. Our musical culture is like that of the early nineteenth century—the age of the Grand Tour. They were as Greekless at that time in their ideas of sculpture as we are sixteenth-century-less in our ideas of music. The sixteenth century is the centre of music. Though Palestrina is the greatest composer of that time, he is not the only one. We might as well get rid of our anti-patriotic ideas, for the English people covered the whole field.

Beethoven's nine symphonies are as central to music as Shakespeare's plays to literature. What makes them great is that "everything is somewhere".

One of the tests of greatness is that you cannot take a quotation from its context without its losing thereby: if it *gains* by quotation, you may be sure that its writer can't compose. The question of what is and what is not composition is one of the least understood and most fundamental things in music.

These notes, of course, can give only the scantiest outline of a great man's thought and personality. Nevertheless they may be of some interest and use. Fortunately the world has his books (and, if it only had the sense to insist on hearing them, it has also his noble compositions—opera, symphony, concertos, &c.) by which to remember him.

LETTERS FROM SIR DONALD TOVEY TO  
W. B. WORDSWORTH<sup>(2)</sup>

39 ROYAL TERRACE,  
EDINBURGH 7.  
(No date.)

DEAR SIR,

I am much ashamed of my unconscionable delay in answering your letters and reporting on your compositions. I can get through my

<sup>(1)</sup> See Tovey's lecture, 'The Main Stream of Music,' delivered to the British Academy (Milford, London, 1938).

<sup>(2)</sup> Published by kind permission of Lady Tovey.



work only by ascribing my complete failure at tackling each job to the pressure of all the others.

Your violin sonata and the string quartet movement certainly interest me quite enough to make it a pleasure to me to give you lessons when and where we could meet. I don't think you would fit into our degree-work here; we have some interesting students, but the curriculum doesn't leave much time to do what one most wants. If you care to make the journey to Edinburgh and could stay here for what's left of February (preferably after the 20th, as I have to be away just then<sup>(3)</sup>) and most of March, I could find out more clearly what you need.

Music is at the present day in much the same muddle as it was about 1607. It's impossible to tell, without personal acquaintance, whether a tentative composer is trying to write pure Meredithian mixed metaphors or Gertrude Stein or a mixture of both. Your work is not in that condition—your language seems normal enough: but I can't tell whether the confused state of your form and style comes from wanting to get away from "academic" ideas or from never having been "through the mill". Nobody does go through the mill nowadays, except in Paris, and it was a shockingly badly designed and unhygienic surgical apparatus at the best of times.

If you have leisure, the best plan for you would be to come here, see me, and see how my best students tackle things, and then, if you like, make such arrangements as we can for work in the summer when I am in the south (when not abroad).

Yours sincerely,

D. F. TOVEY.

39 ROYAL TERRACE,  
EDINBURGH 7.  
9th October, 1935.

DEAR MR. WORDSWORTH,

I am very sorry that you have been ill, but I hope you will soon make a good recovery and be able to come here. I have a great deal to say about the work of yours which I have in hand, and I don't see how I can cover the ground by marking the scores.

Of the Brahms Variations, it is true that I have seen up to page 28, but I think you would have made more progress if you had rescored what I had already seen, in the light of criticism. You are still a long way from what I call normality.<sup>(4)</sup> Your methods are roundabout, and, though often clever, they miss the obviously right thing. It is never any use avoiding the obvious when it is right. In the second part of Variation 7 I cannot get into the state of mind which would not give the melody to a clarinet, but perhaps you never heard Mühlfeld play. Your sordined brass at the end would be disastrous. You evidently have no vivid idea of its flimsy ghostliness in *piano* and its Punch and Judy quality in anything loud enough to penetrate.

<sup>(3)</sup> He had to visit Buckingham Palace to receive his knighthood.

<sup>(4)</sup> He spoke much of his conception of "normality" at this time, and the following year he delivered his lecture on 'Normality and Freedom in Music' at the Sheldonian Theatre. It was subsequently published (Oxford University Press, 1936).

I should like to answer your various queries about this scoring in detail, but this would be a long business, and what you really need is an imagination well-fed by experience and a lot of practice in revising your scoring. I hope it will not be long before you can come up here, because you can learn more in one orchestral rehearsal and in five minutes' talk than I can possibly impart by correspondence.

The trouble about your Theme and Variations is again a certain lack of normality, typified for me by my difficulty in making out why on earth what you call the theme isn't one of the variations. I know plenty of masterly themes which sound obvious, but are highly organized; and I know some great themes which don't sound obvious, but prove to be simple; but your theme is less clear than the first variation, and does not explain itself like Handel's device of beginning with an arabesque statement and then making *doubles* on the bare outline; and the harmonic scheme is not strong enough to preserve in a series of variations. Putting your main modulation into the subdominant becomes irritating after five variations, and destroys any point in your sixth variation being itself in the subdominant. You have lots of good ideas, but at present no means of rescuing them from the limbo of the interesting and artificial. And it is no use explaining to me the senses in which your theme underlies the variations or returns at the end, when I couldn't remember the theme even if I knew it by heart.

Your scoring of 'Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland' is technically very creditable, but I don't recommend the scoring of organ music for orchestra, either as an exercise or as a form of art. Organ music that lends itself to orchestration is pretty certain to represent the organ's worst spurious imitations of the orchestra, to begin with; and orchestration that succeeds in imitating the organ *untrains* your imagination and inculcates all the common vices of arterio-sclerotic scoring.

Till you come here, I would like you to pass the time with an exercise that (a) stimulates *only* the straightest orchestral imagination, (b) is, with the aid of a little memory, very largely a matter of demonstrable correctness, and (c) finally correctable by the greatest master of orchestration himself. Your apparatus is the vocal score of 'Meistersinger', and the exercise is to score every setting of *Stollen* and *Abgesang* of the 'Preislied' in the third act. Walther sings to Sachs, and later to Eva, six settings of the *Stollen* and three of the *Abgesang*. Lastly there is his final public version of the 'Preislied', with its magnificent digression in the *Stollen*. Write in pencil, and, of course, don't look at the score until you have completed at least one section. Suit yourself as to how much you will attempt before you consult Wagner. Then ink over the places where Wagner differs from you. I daresay that, if you do this one section at a time, you will notice a marked decrease in the need for ink as you proceed. At all events, you will get a vivid idea of Wagner's colouring and economy. To save you time, I inform you that your score-paper had better have 24 staves if you want room for corrections. The orchestra is, as you know, that of Beethoven's ninth Symphony, plus a harp and bass tuba and pair of horns, and minus contra-fagotto.

With best wishes for your speedy recovery.

Yours sincerely,

DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY.

39 ROYAL TERRACE,  
EDINBURGH 7,  
15.10.35.

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

My letter evidently crossed with yours. I am sorry that doctors in human form have you tied by the leg, but am glad that this does not prevent you holding a pen ; and I hope that you will conciliate the doctors by doing all they tell you to make your recovery sure, even if slow.

Let us be quite clear what I mean by normality. The last thing that it implies is the imitation of the classics, and the equally last thing that it implies is the avoidance of the right because the classics have done it. Unfortunately, it is impossible to inculcate normality without pointing to extant examples of it, and the extant examples are almost certain to be classical. It is equally true that most of the classical composers, almost in proportion as they are normal, will tend to be very singular individuals, whose characteristics as such it is an absurd, though natural, error to imitate. But life is not long enough for us to be always on our guard against expressing the matter indiscreetly. For instance, when I am surprised at your not giving a phrase of Brahms to the clarinet, it is very indiscreet of me to say, " But perhaps you never heard Mühlfeld " though it was Mühlfeld for whom Brahms wrote his clarinet music. But Mühlfeld was a great clarinettist, and Brahms and Mozart great writers for the clarinet, because they had achieved a normal—that is, an ideal view of that instrument. As a minor detail in Beethoven's style, his view of the clarinet happens to be about a tone too high in pitch. Brahms's view of the oboe is normally inconveniently low. His view of choral voices is, in my opinion, the most normal since Handel's. On the other hand, his view of the solo voice is often considerably warped by his early experience of, I believe, a couple of sopranos who had not only a high *tessitura*, but a particular knack of yodelling ; from which Brahms acquired a most inconvenient habit of skipping downwards. The whole question is quite timeless and independent of precedent ; classical or modern. You haven't yet got a normal view of a theme for variations. And I think it would not be a bad exercise for you to send me several themes for the purpose, not letting yourself be afraid of putting down what you may think rather infantile as a tune. It is quite possible that your most normal effort may be the most original, but your soul would take no damage if your theme should be as prosaic as Diabelli's waltz, which not only Beethoven, but the fifty other composers to whom Diabelli sent it, found extraordinarily stimulating for really free variations.

I think you will find the ' Preislied ' exercise very useful, and the indications in the vocal score will certainly not solve too much of the problem for you. Be guided by the words in your choice of colours. . . .

Sibelius is as good an example as any that I know for normality attained in a very peculiar and inimitable style. Normality is, as Bernard was informed when congratulated by his oculist, a very rare thing. The pianoforte of Mozart is not yet normal. That of Beethoven was highly stimulating as a sketchy medium for a symphonic writer. It first became normal in the hands of Chopin and Liszt, but by that time it ceases to be wholly normal to music itself. That is why Beethoven was already in his last days complaining that it was an unsatisfactory instrument, though it

was far more satisfactory to him than the harpsichord was to Bach, as I am glad to find Schweitzer maintaining. However, this general subject is endless. Its main interest for you and me is that it concerns our work in concrete detail as one point and another turns up.

I will try and send you back what I have in hand of yours with notes. In the meantime, I think you will find that Wagner exercise quite useful, and controllable by yourself.

This letter is probably enough for one dose.

Yours sincerely,

DONALD FRANCIS TOVEY.



## THE RECORDER OR ENGLISH FLUTE

BY CARL F. DOLMETSCH

My aim in this article will be to look ahead rather than back into the recorder's early history, and to treat of it as a living instrument—the only view which makes a thing worth while for me. I shall therefore avoid the many well-known and oft-quoted references from early writings, in which field there are others far better qualified to work.

The recorder, a delightful and traditionally English wood-wind instrument, is of simple appearance. It is made in three sections, having no keys except in the case of the larger instruments where the distances between the holes are too great for the hand. There are eight holes, seven of which are in the front, while the eighth is at the back and controlled by the left thumb. On the best modern instruments the two lowest holes are divided, *i.e.* two little holes side by side, a device which produces clearer chromatics in the lower register. The English flute, to give the recorder its other name, has a full chromatic range of two octaves and one note, although skilled players can extend this range by another half octave with the use of special fingerings. It will be obvious from the foregoing that this instrument can be played in any key, though like most instruments it is more comfortable in some than in others. The three sections which are made to fit into one another have adjustable cork-lined joints, whereby the total length of the instrument can be increased at the upper end should it become necessary to lower the pitch of a warm recorder to be in tune with accompanying instruments. The inside bore of the mouthpiece is parallel, while that of the middle and end sections is mainly conical, but with very subtle deviations which require absolute accuracy in manufacture if the consequent intonation of the finished instrument is to be correct. It is here that the majority of would-be recorder-makers come to grief, for no amount of patience and care in tuning the holes will save an instrument whose bore is inaccurate.

Absolute purity and expressive qualities of tone are two of the recorder's chief attractions. On cursory examination, the instrument's organ-pipe principle of tone-production may conceal, by

its *apparent* simplicity, the dynamic latitude and subtle shadings of tone-colour obtainable ; the effective mastery of these resources constitutes one of the finest aspects of recorder technique. Their presence, though obvious enough to those actually listening to an accomplished performer, is often overlooked by the partially initiated, or by players who have not mastered the intricacies. There is, of course, the discouraging type of listener who only hears what agrees with his preconceived ideas (perhaps based upon what he has read), but it is not for him that this article is written. It would therefore be as fatal a mistake to assume that recorder tone is just "ready-made" as to suggest that the only secret of piano-forte tone-production is to strike the keys indiscriminately (which could be achieved without lessons !), or that it would be sufficient for a novice to draw his violin bow across the strings to equal the superb results obtained by a master violinist.

An enterprising beginner, in trying to increase the volume of sound, generally overblows, or he may attempt a *pianissimo* by merely underblowing, while he frequently forgets the essential tonguing. Such incomplete methods inevitably result in faulty intonation and lack of clarity in high notes, followed by the player's possible loss of faith and, more serious still, the giving of a bad name to the innocent recorder. It should therefore be understood that variations in breath-pressure *must* be compensated by corresponding adjustments in finger work. This involves in certain cases the use of special fingerings, as with some trills, plus judicious shading of holes and partial lifting of the fingers according to requirements. I need hardly say that to have a good ear and, further, to use it is as indispensable to the recorder star as to the accomplished string player. It is only by observing these perfectly attainable essentials that the volume of tone can be successfully controlled.

The tone, despite its mellowness, is possessed of remarkable carrying powers, a characteristic which enables it to meet the demands of both concert-hall and music-room. There is a telling warmth in *cantabile* passages, while the instantaneous response to quick tonguing is unexcelled, lending to staccato a piquancy and freshness to delight the ear.

The recorder family, or "whole consort", consists of five main members :

- SOPRANINO : Fundamental note second F above middle C
- DESCANT : Fundamental note first C above middle C.
- TREBLE : Fundamental note first F above middle C.
- TENOR : Fundamental note middle C
- BASS : Fundamental note first F below middle C.

In addition there are a few intermediate sizes, notably those in D (tenors and descants) and in G (trebles and small basses). Such English writers as Robert Woodcock and William Babell composed concertos for solo recorder(s) in D<sup>(1)</sup> with strings, while J. S. Bach's well-known Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, in G major, includes two treble recorders in G (*flauti d'echo*) which share the honours of the work with the solo violin; the accompanying instruments consist of string quartet, violone (double bass viol) and continuo part for the harpsichord. The above-mentioned works have been performed with the correct instruments many times at the Haslemere Festivals.

The discovery and performance at Haslemere and elsewhere of sonatas, consorts, concertos and *obbligati*, composed by such famous masters as Bach, Handel, Purcell, Telemann, Locillet and many an Elizabethan established for the English flute its rightful place in the world of music; not as an antiquarian curiosity, nor yet as a substitute for any modern instrument, but as a living means of musical expression. Does not an instrument for which these unquestioned masters wrote some of their finest works merit the attention of the artist and composer of to-day? This view was clearly expressed by J. A. Westrup when writing from Haslemere in 'The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post' on July 19th 1938: "These winning instruments are unjustly neglected to-day. A composer who would write a quartet for them, instead of wringing painful novelty from trumpet or violin, could earn no small gratitude."

It was the then conspicuous lack of contemporary recorder music which prompted me to give a lead in February 1939, when I wrote and performed my Theme and Variations for solo recorder and harpsichord at Wigmore Hall. Nine months later the situation had radically changed, as may be seen from the following notice which appeared in 'The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post' after I had played at a studio concert of the London Contemporary Music Centre in June 1939. Mr. Westrup wrote:

The recorder has hitherto been associated with the revival of music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the London Contemporary Music Centre's studio meeting on Saturday afternoon we learnt how it could serve the composer of to-day.

The result was encouraging. Provided that an instrument is mechanically perfect—as the modern recorder is—there is clearly no reason why it should be confined to the music of the past. . . .

Not all the composers represented in Saturday's programme had thoroughly grasped either the character or the technique of

<sup>(1)</sup> The "6th flute", so called because it was pitched a sixth above the treble recorder in F, which appears to have been the standard.

the instrument. But the concert as a whole proved a serious intention to establish and justify the relationship between this seductive instrument and the music of our time. The most successful of the works for treble recorder was Lennox Berkeley's *Sonatina*. Its apparent simplicity concealed a neat and attractive invention and the solo instrument sounded completely at home with the material.

It was the general appreciation at this private hearing, coupled with my personal enjoyment and esteem of Mr. Berkeley's *Sonatina*,<sup>(1)</sup> which decided me to give the work its first public performance at my second full-length London recorder recital at Wigmore Hall on November 18th 1939.

Acknowledgments and thanks are due to Manuel Jacobs, himself a recorder player and composer for that instrument, for his enterprise in personally bringing to the notice of ten composers of the younger British school the tempting resources offered by this English flute. As a result of his efforts, ten new sonatinas (the Lennox Berkeley among them) were written, and the entire set would no doubt have appeared in print by now had not the war intervened.

The foregoing will substantiate the view that an instrument like the recorder, which can live on its own merits irrespective of age, will surely be given a future besides a distinguished past and present. Some of the many living composers who have already succumbed to its charm are Hindemith, Benjamin Britten, Stanley Bate and Alan Rawsthorne. The recorder enthusiast has something new to turn to, and should feel confident of more to come.

Quite apart from its immense scope as a solo instrument, or in ensemble with instruments of other families, the recorder is highly effective when played in consort with members of its own family. The blend is complete and delightful, the parts being clear to follow, while the inner voices in particular are never in danger of being lost. A comparatively small number of early works for consorts of two to seven recorders have survived, plus a host of beautiful and suitable arrangements of music for the performance of which the composers gave no clear directions with regard to media; to these may be added a number of modern works, and unlimited scope for the future.

The recorder's mellowness of timbre is apt to mislead listeners by giving the impression that the instrument is playing an octave below its actual pitch, and it often requires a test with tuning-fork or keyboard instrument to convince the less familiar that the funda-

<sup>(1)</sup> This work has since been published by Messrs. Schott & Co., of London.



mental note of, say, a descant recorder is not middle C, but is in fact the octave above. So much is this the case that a recorder can even be scored to take a second part below a voice or violin, when the actual notes emitted are above those of the instrument it accompanies. This probably accounts for one's being able to listen with pleasure to the little sopranino recorder whose range of over two octaves begins at F on the top line of the treble clef, while the same notes from almost any other melodic instrument would be considered shrill and piercing.

The literature itself reveals (when played with the correct interpretation, cadenzas and ornamentation based on contemporary evidence) that the highest degree of technical skill was and is required for adequate performance. Although virtuosity should never be worshipped as an end in itself, it is an essential part of the true artist's equipment, and the comparative ease with which thousands of beginners arrive at the playing of simple tunes in a remarkably short time may lead one to underestimate the rich rewards the recorder will yield in the hands of an accomplished artist. This unfortunate tendency to measure the full scope of the instrument's resources by the results so far obtained by the greater mass of recorder players frequently leads to an expression of opinions and comments unflattering to the instrument, some of which I have heard from the lips of well-known musicians in charge of concerts at competitive festivals, teachers' courses, and in connection with provincial amateur music societies. For instance: "Of course one can't expect the recorders to be in tune", or "the recorders are bound to fail in these rapid passages" and "how could such a thing be played by a simple pipe without keys?". It has, however, often been my privilege, and no doubt that of my colleagues—notably Edgar Hunt—to make these perfectly open-minded musicians modify their views on such occasions, but alas, how many more are still allowed to escape unenlightened! It is hard that the splendid efforts of a majority, many of whom are amateurs in the truest sense, playing for their own enjoyment without thought of professional ambitions, should be responsible for so summary a judgment, when it is probably their last wish that a standard be determined by their present achievements, representing but a fraction of their aspirations. The truth is that the recorder's meteoric revival has as yet allowed insufficient time for many peak performers to develop and to demonstrate their instrument far and wide. There is nevertheless a great deal of promising material, particularly in the younger ranks, from which our stars will in good time emerge, if opinion will only be patient and not commit an error

tantamount to labelling the full resources of the violin with the standard attained by the average school orchestra.

It is now evident that the modern revival of the recorder, perhaps even more than that of the harpsichord, is an accomplished fact. At intervals during the last 150 years old instruments were taken out of museums and collections by antiquarians who played upon them without a proper and indispensable study of the correct fingering as set out in treatises which survive, and then wondered how their forebears could have endured such "bad intonation". Until Arnold Dolmetsch made his first researches into this subject in 1903, no one had studied the real technique and music of the instrument with more than antiquarian interest. It was here, as in everything he did, that Arnold Dolmetsch showed himself to be more than an antiquarian, for he viewed the recorder as a live potentiality far beyond that of a mere museum piece, and realizing that good things are often put by, only to be rediscovered with astonishment at their having ever been forgotten, he set about making recorders, not copies of old ones, but made to his own designs which none the less conformed to the basic principles of the instrument.

It was in 1918-19 that he produced the first modern recorders, and in 1925 the first full consort of recorders with bass was heard at the Haslemere Festival. From this sprang the tremendous enthusiasm which spread from here to Germany, and subsequently all over the world. Unfortunately a certain amount of confusion was caused by the Germans when they sought to simplify recorder fingering before they had thoroughly understood it. At first glance it appeared to them that if one could lift the fingers consecutively when playing the main diatonic scale it would be infinitely simpler than having to bother with cross-fingerings. By introducing this apparent simplification they at once robbed their earlier modern recorders of the complete chromatic scale, while the intonation of what remained was far from perfect. It was this which led to what is now known as the "German system" of fingering, a purely modern and regrettable development. We must, however, acknowledge one great service at least rendered to the recorder by the Germans, for in commercializing the instrument they managed to turn out a really low-priced article which, though far from satisfying the permanent requirements of discriminating players, was at least cheap enough to enable the multitudes to try their hand without incurring great expense. The obvious and logical step for those whose success revealed the shortcomings of their instrument was to aspire to a first-class recorder of English manufacture, costing

something like seven guineas as against seven shillings. No instrument can with justice be called a recorder if it does not conform to the traditional English fingering, which was, incidentally, the one recognized all over Europe until 1750-60. Realizing their mistake rather late in the day, a number of German firms responded to the appeals from this side for a very cheap recorder with English fingering by producing inexpensive models based as nearly as possible on the measurements of a number of Dolmetsch instruments obtained quite openly for that purpose. The result was encouraging, and although mass-produced inexpensive instruments could never be expected and were not meant to equal their English hand-made models, it brought a real recorder within the means of all, from council-school child to Eton boy. The war has, of course, put a stop to the importation of these instruments, but a few British firms are now doing what should have been done long ago—producing really cheap instruments. The cheapest of them are moulded from plastic materials, and although they cannot with truth be said to equal those in wood, they are serviceable and fill a much-felt need. As always, the more successful and ambitious eventually acquire a first-class and unavoidably expensive hand-made instrument.

A welcome sign of the recorder's popularity is manifest in the Society of Recorder Players, which was formed in October 1937, with my late father Arnold Dolmetsch as its first president. The society was bound to come into existence, for the idea of forming such an organization had occurred to several groups of people independently. When they heard of each other's intentions they decided to join forces, realizing that their united efforts would achieve far greater results. The outcome of this coalition is clear when it is seen that the musical directorship is shared by Edgar Hunt and myself, and that Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Champion, so well-known to thousands of recorder players, are respectively chairman and honorary secretary. The committee is no less representative.

The principal aims of the Society are as follows :

To create a centre where all interested can meet, and where reliable information on all recorder matters and activities is obtainable.

To raise the general standard of playing by organizing at general meetings combined playing in which all can take part, led by the hon. musical directors, and the holding of teachers' tests or examinations in order that those wishing to teach may be qualified to do so.

To assist in the formation of local groups by putting members in touch with one another.

To publish recorder music both old and new, and also suitable

arrangements, and to issue a yearly bulletin, 'The Recorder News', reporting on activities of the Society and its members, and also those of recorder players abroad.

To hold an annual concert of music for or including recorders.

Few men in their lifetime are allowed to see their labours bear fruit: Arnold Dolmetsch, pioneer of the recorder revival, was one of these rare exceptions. Since his earliest experiments in playing and subsequently making recorders the movement has gathered impetus and strength expressing itself in many ways of which the chief have been outlined. It should be a source of inspiration to enthusiasts that the rising generation of composers and players take a serious view of the recorder's place in the world of music and are setting out to re-establish and maintain the traditional supremacy in both instruments and players which England always enjoyed.



## ISAAC NATHAN <sup>(1)</sup>

BY EDWARD RIMBAULT DIBDIN

ISAAC NATHAN was a well-known and successful teacher of singing and a musical composer of some merit and importance in the early part of the nineteenth century ; chiefly in the production of vocal music, which at that time had a large part in social life. His professional activities included contributions to the music of several pieces by the clever dramatist James Kenney, and he was also author of books germane to his professional activities. A good appearance and engaging manners, backed by his reputation as a teacher, brought him into contact with various personages of importance, including even the great First Gentleman in Europe. But for what seems to have been neglect of Mr. Micawber's well-known and infallible recipe for success in life Nathan might have achieved greater things. His progress in London was so much interrupted by the incivilities of creditors, including imprisonment, that he was compelled to make retreats to the West of England and Wales. When he returned, the renewal of their offensive made him essay success on the stage. According to an early memoir in the ' Dictionary of Musicians ' (1827) he appeared at Covent Garden in March 1816 as Henry Bertram in Terry's three-act musical play, ' Guy Mannering '. As, according to Genest, that part was played by Sinclair, this appears to be incorrect, so probably Nathan was given a minor singing-part. It was found that his voice, though agreeable and well-trained, was not effective on the stage, and so his histrionic career ended. Later, Nathan supplied some of the music for dramatic pieces in the then still prevailing absurd fashion of having two or more composers for a musical play. Among these were ' Sweethearts and Wives ' (Drury Lane, July 7th 1823) ; ' Alcaid ; or, The Secrets of Office ' (Haymarket, August 10th 1824) ; and ' The Illustrious Stranger ; or, Married and Buried ' (Haymarket, October 4th 1827), all written by James Kenney. For these pieces he supplied six songs in ' Sweethearts and Wives ' ; an overture and sixteen songs in ' Alcaid ' (probably all the music) ;

<sup>(1)</sup> Originally intended as a review ; but the author had so much of his own to add that his contribution is published in the form of an article.—Ed.

and an overture and ten vocal pieces in 'The Illustrious Stranger'. These were all published, as well as 'Liston's Funeral Dirge for his Interment at Drury Lane Theatre'. This may have been for 'Sweethearts and Wives', which was produced at Drury Lane, but it seems to be more appropriate to 'The Illustrious Stranger', the sub-title of which is 'Married and Buried'. Liston had a part in both pieces.

Nathan's career for many years after this continued much on the same lines. His best claim to be remembered is his 'Hebrew Melodies', some of which he stated were traditional and very ancient, for which lyrics were written by Lord Byron. How far his description of them is accurate it is not possible to say. As a Jew, closely in touch with other nationals (his father was cantor at the Canterbury Synagogue), he had ample facilities for knowing of the existence of such things. If, in adjusting them to fit poems in a language not related to Hebrew, he altered them, he was to that extent the composer; if not, he was no more than a skilful adapter, except as composer of the suitable accompaniments. The others were no doubt composed by himself. In his own time he was apparently looked on as entitled to all the credit for his publication, as is shown in an unpublished manuscript by my grandfather, in which he wrote that in 1826 he engaged for his theatre "a clever imitator, Mr. Beckwith, a singer (pupil of Mr. Nathan, composer of The Hebrew Melodies, &c.)"; adding "whose frequent encores proved the estimation in which he was held by our audience"; a practical tribute to his teacher's skill. I find on looking over a file of the Surrey Theatre playbills of 1826 that Mr. Beckwith on several occasions interpolated songs "in addition to the songs written for the piece". These included "a Ballad written by himself, the Music composed by Mr. Nathan", and "A Love Lyric, written by a Lady, the Music by Mr. Nathan". The lady was probably Lady Caroline Lamb, with whom he was on friendly terms. She was godmother of one of his daughters. In an undated letter to him she wrote "Thank you for my song. I gave one copy to Lady Cork, who is here, and she has nieces who play and sing very well".

Extant biographical notices are all vague. Conjectures take the place of facts. For his ancestry, age and movements we have to be satisfied with probabilities. Even the careful account of him in the 'Dictionary of National Biography' has this character. A recent little book about Nathan<sup>(1)</sup> is therefore opened with a hope

<sup>(1)</sup> *Isaac Nathan: Friend of Byron*. By Olga Somech Phillips. pp. 128. (Minerva Publishing Company, London, 1940) 6s.

for a more satisfying account of one who in his day was a definite figure in English musical history. That this hope is not realized seems to be due less to the author's lack of special sources of information than to her rather amateurish way of writing. In reading her one sometimes has a puzzled feeling resembling that of Arthur Clennam and others in listening to the outpourings of the voluble Flora in Dickens's 'Little Dorrit'. In the first chapter we learn that Nathan was the son of a Polish Jew, said to be an illegitimate son of King Stanislas Poniatowski, that he fled from Warsaw when that monarch was deposed and settled at Canterbury, where Isaac was born: probably in 1790, not in 1792, as recorded in 1837. The royal grandfather does not figure in either of the biographies mentioned. In support of this claim of descent from him Mrs. Phillips supplies portraits of Nathan and King Stanislas. The features are not dissimilar except that his majesty's white wig does not resemble Isaac's flowing dark locks.

After a good many pages of sketchy information about the father and other members of an apparently prolific family, and Isaac's early progress towards his vocation, the following three chapters treat of his connection with Byron, illustrated with a portrait of the poet. Apparently the chief motive of the book is to prove that poet and musician were not brought together by the Hon. Douglas Kinnaid, but may have become acquainted while the latter was studying ancient languages at Cambridge. There is no evidence of this, and a letter of June 13th 1814 from Nathan to Byron, which is quoted, does not suggest any previous acquaintance; while in another a fortnight later he actually says "having endeavoured in vain to obtain an introduction, and not having been fortunate enough to succeed, will, I trust, plead my apology for the unwarrantable liberty I now take in thus addressing you". Assuming that the originals of these letters are extant and genuine, the conjectured acquaintance at Cambridge and Coleridge's statement as to an introduction by Kinnaid may be dismissed. As regards the latter it is not improbable that Mrs. Phillips is justified in thinking Thomas Moore had a prejudice against Nathan which inclined him to belittle his part in getting Byron to write for the melodies: they were both song composers.

A better case might have been made out for Nathan's having influenced Byron to write the lyrics by a shorter and simpler use of the documents quoted, and a reference to Nathan's own publication five years after the death of Byron, in a small volume, 'Fugitive Pieces and Reminiscences of Lord Byron, containing an entirely new edition of the Hebrew Melodies . . .' (1829). This contains

a full account of his intercourse with Byron and the preparation of the Hebrew Melodies, as well as Braham's connection with that work, an interesting section of letters, anecdotes and recollections of Lady Caroline Lamb, much information about his own publications, and other matters. Except a rather explosive "Advertisement" about some unfavourable critic it is much better written than some of his later fulminations, graced with quotations in Hebrew, Latin and French. It is naturally a picture of Byron from a hero-worshipper's point of view, but it gives the impression that as soon as Byron became interested in the project, he took great pains to secure its success by spending many hours with Nathan to compare ideas and plan suitable lyrics. For a period of about a year they were on as intimate terms as was possible between a lord, who wrote to "My dear Nathan", and a musician who continued to address him in reply as "My Lord", and signed himself "Your very obliged and devoted servant". It is illuminating as regards the Hon. Douglas Kinnaird that, after a dinner-party at his house, when one of Nathan's songs had been sung, the host said "Mr. Nathan, I expect a—a—that—a—you bring out these melodies in good style—a—a—and bear in mind that—a—a—his Lordship's name does not suffer from scantiness—a—a—in their publication." Observing Nathan's discomfiture by this gauche injunction, Byron at the first opportunity took his hand and said in a low voice "Do not mind him, he is a fool." Next day, when they met, Byron said "Nathan, do not suffer that capricious fool to lead you into more expense than is absolutely necessary. Bring out the work to your own taste: I have no ambition to gratify, beyond that of being useful to you." The only glimpse we get of the poet's less favourable conduct is the story of how he succeeded in making the player Dowton drunk, just because he was a most temperate man, and was never known to have become intoxicated. Nathan appears to have fully appreciated the advantage it would be to his reputation to insist on the claim that he was a friend of Byron's. He repeatedly harped upon the subject in his later wordy and bombastic writings, and called his house at Sydney 'Byron Lodge'.

A short chapter touching on Nathan's productions contains no new matter, except that some time before 1830 he was in business in partnership with a younger brother as a music-seller in Westminster. This brother, named Barnett, better known to the public as Baron Nathan, was a dancing-master, and celebrated for his egg hornpipe. He was master of the ceremonies, managing director and presiding genius of the once greatly famous Rosherville Gardens, beloved of the Cockney, but now gone for ever. A later chapter on



him is rendered amusing, though not particularly relevant, by a quaint picture of the Baron performing his famous dance and a number of quotations from ancient numbers of 'Punch'. John Braham is briefly referred to, and we learn that Nathan's eldest son was named Charles Braham Nathan. The famous tenor singer might more fitly have been disposed of in connection with the Hebrew Melodies. He, being a Jew, and perhaps a relation, was of course acquainted with Nathan, and he certainly had a connection with the Hebrew Melodies. Coleridge said that Byron gave Nathan his lyrics "on the understanding that they were to be set to music and sung in public by Braham". He was also a composer of some extremely successful songs, but it is improbable that he had a hand in composing the Hebrew Melodies, unless as consultant and adviser of a much younger and less famous friend. But Coleridge's statement is supported by the fact that when twelve of the songs were published in 1815, the title, as quoted by Mrs. Phillips, was 'A Selection of Hebrew Melodies, Ancient and Modern, with appropriate symphonies and accompaniments by J. Braham and I. Nathan, the poetry written expressly for the work by the Right Honourable Lord Byron'. When the composer's share of profit reached something over £5,000, we are told, it was divided between Braham and Nathan; thereafter the former had no further share.

We learn that Nathan, when approaching middle age, proved himself a perfect gentleman by fighting a duel, in which his right arm was wounded, and assaulting Lord Langford. In each instance the persons attacked were offenders against ladies of his acquaintance. The grandson of a monarch could do no less: *noblesse oblige*.

For several years before Nathan departed to Australia in 1841 he had much trouble about what Mrs. Phillips calls the Melbourne affair. Exactly what it was is not made clear, further than that it was the payment of a bill for over £2,000 incurred in the service of the lately deceased king. Perhaps it had something to do with Queen Caroline and George IV, perhaps the versatile Nathan was employed on the Continent as a spy, perhaps it related to bogus bonds issued by that monarch. Nathan's appeals to Lord Melbourne and others were duly handed to the Circumlocution Office, and nothing resulted. As Nathan's creditors were equally pressing about their claims on him, he became disheartened and took ship for Australia to pursue his profession "among a depressed people". On February 11th 1841 he landed, appropriately, at Melbourne. Whether or not the Micawber family went out on the same ship is not recorded.

His objective was Sydney, and there he remained until his death

twenty-three years later, when he was accidentally killed by a fall on alighting from a tramway car, near his home. If we knew more about his activities and their effect on the creation and development of musical taste we should probably find that this was the most useful period of his life. He was a pioneer for music at a time when all the arts had no place in the life of the people. Soon after his arrival an organ was installed in the cathedral, and he was invited to give an oratorio, the then usual term for a more or less sacred concert, to celebrate the occasion. He included in the programme two fugal pieces from masses by Beethoven and Mozart. The audience, accustomed only to simple melody, was much puzzled by such scientific music, and seemed to say: "There, do you hear? they are all behind—they can't keep together; how they are scampering after each other!—they are no musicians!" From this state of darkness Nathan laboured to raise the public taste by concerts, lectures, writings, formation of choral societies, improvement of church music and his skill as a teacher of singing. He also made efforts to preserve records of the aboriginal music of a vanishing people, which, if they are extant, may have much value. To anyone acquainted with the general idea that the Australian "black fellow" was the lowest type of the genus homo, whose arithmetical gamut was limited to "one—two—three—plenty" it is somewhat of a surprise to find that during his researches Nathan found a native melody which had a striking affinity to one of Handel's compositions. Still more remarkable was his encounter with a white negro from the interior country of Imbekee sitting with a harp on his knee, playing and singing something like Handel's Hallelujah chorus. What a white negro may be I do not know, and I was under the impression that no sort of harp had ever been known farther east of Great Britain than Egypt and Assyria.

It is a fairly safe inference from the contents of Mrs. Phillips's book that she is either a resident in Australia or very well acquainted with the social history of Sydney, also well informed about the manners and customs of the Jewish people. She might therefore achieve a more satisfying biography of Nathan if, without putting aside her useful enthusiasm for the subject, she tested all records and traditions and set the result out in chronological order, with a full and dated list of his publications, either musical or otherwise. This would be a useful permanent record about a man whose remarkable talents enabled him to make a mark in English musical history in the earlier years of last century; and also, after he was fifty years old, to be a valuable pioneer for his art in one of our great dominions.

## WAGNER'S INFLUENCE ON HITLER

BY ROBERT L. JACOBS

"I RECOGNIZE in Wagner my only predecessor. . . . I regard him as a supreme prophetic figure": these words of Hitler's to Rauschnigg recorded in the latter's famous book 'Hitler Speaks' are perhaps thought-provoking. One knew, of course, that Hitler was a passionate Wagnerian, that he fawned upon the operas at Bayreuth and Nuremberg and wallowed in the prose-works, but not that he actually claims a kind of affinity with Wagner. Wagner after all was primarily a music-dramatist: his philosophical and other opinions—his Aryanism, his anti-Semitism, his vegetarianism—however sympathetic, were incidental. Could there be some factor at work in Hitler's mind here which has not been sufficiently appreciated?

I am emboldened to suggest that this might be the case by a passage I came across recently in Konrad Heiden's well-known 'History of National Socialism'. Having exhaustively described the frightening ramifications of the National Socialist system of politics, economics, administration, education, Heiden stops suddenly and asks: "What is the purpose of it all?" Casting round for an answer he says this: "It is undeniable that National Socialism . . . set in motion mighty physical and mental forces. But these mighty forces were turned inwards upon themselves and not directed against externals. . . . The deeds of this Nationalism whose admiring gaze is always turned upon itself *only affect its own inner nature*" (italics mine). This last sentence is dangerous writing, perhaps (or dangerous translation): deeds must in the nature of the case affect more than the doer's "own inner nature", something in the world outside; Heiden's meaning, I take it, is that in the case of the Nazis they do so only incidentally since the "mighty physical and mental forces" which they express are turned "inwards upon themselves"; in other words that the fundamental motive of their deeds is not this or that external material gain to be achieved by them, but just the tremendous intoxication of doing them. It is, one might put it, not a rational, but a *dramatic* motive.

This started a train of thought in my mind ; I turned to ' *Mein Kampf* ' and discovered therein two relevant passages. The first refers to what Hitler considers to be the root cause of Germany's disaster in the first World War, the alliance with the racially degenerate Hapsburg Empire. This matter, the keystone of his historical argument, Hitler describes in terms of Wagnerian drama, thus : " It was the fantastic idea of a *Nibelungen* alliance with the decomposed body of the Hapsburg state that brought about Germany's ruin ". The reference is plain : whereas Wagner's Wotan destroyed himself by stealing and bartering the ill-gotten Nibelung hoard, Germany destroyed herself by going to still greater lengths, " by the fantastic idea " of allying herself with an Empire ridden by Nibelung-Jews, Serbs, Hungarians, Czechs, Croats. . . . The second passage refers to the first triumph of the pioneer German Worker's Party, later the National Socialist Party : the mass meeting in the Munich Hofbräuhaus in 1920. It occurs, as is fitting, in the peroration to the first part of the book entitled ' A Retrospect ' and runs thus : " A fire was enkindled from whose glowing heat the Sword would be fashioned which would restore freedom to the German Siegfried and bring back life to the German Nation ".

I suggest that these two passages (there are others one could quote) are more than metaphorical, that they are symptomatic of the state of mind Heiden describes, which Wagner perhaps played an important part in creating. Wagner's achievement—one may call it the crowning achievement of German musical and literary romanticism—was to put on the stage and set to great music a mythology, the embodiment of a people's deepest loves and hates and hopes and fears ; to fashion a magic mirror of legend and epic through which men could behold their inmost selves. It is as if the reflection were too much for the imaginative, hot-blooded, ruthless German temperament worked upon by the catastrophes of 1918 and the post-war years. Bedazzled, Hitler, and his hypnotized followers after him, have dreamt themselves through the Wagnerian looking-glass. They have become lunatics at large. The world they rove is limelight-flooded—they are gods, they are heroes, and the others are Nibelungs to be enslaved, chastised, killed. Thus they commit their unspeakable crimes, their eyes shining with self-love.

Therefore Hitler calls Wagner his " only predecessor ", and " a supreme prophetic figure ". Wagner was his kindred spirit, his forerunner, his John the Baptist ; Wagner portrayed what he, Hitler, a greater than Wagner, was to translate into reality.



Incidentally I wonder if Hitler in a sane moment ever reflects upon the finale of Wagner's drama. His Siegfried was stabbed in the back ("as the Jews stabbed the German Army in the back in 1918"—*vide* 'Mein Kampf') but no second Siegfried rose to avenge him; his fall ushered in a *Götterdämmerung*. That 'Götterdämmerung', which is the crowning point of Wagner's masterpiece, indicates nothing if not the tragedy which heroes, who conquer dragons only for the joy of conquering them, bring—tragedy for the hero himself and (therein lies the supreme pity) for countless others.

#### REVIEWERS

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E. R.	Edmund Rubbra.
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G. A.	Gerald Abraham.
J. A. W.	J. A. Westrup.
M. C.	Dr. Mosco Carner.
S. G.	Scott Goddard.
W. G.	Dr. Willis Grant.

Publication being much restricted at present, the Register of Books on Music is postponed. An up-to-date list will appear in the April issue.—Ed.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

*Proceedings of the Musical Association: 66th Session, 1939-40.* pp. 68.  
(Whitehead & Miller, Leeds, 1940) 21s.

The present volume of the Association's Proceedings contains four papers, with discussions. Dr. Karl Geiringer's 'Haydn as an Opera Composer' has the most general interest: he discusses in detail the thirteen operas, most of them written for the private theatre at Esterházy, pointing out how the three last serious operas, influenced by Gluck, lacked something of the "simplicity, humour and naturalness that are the main features of Haydn's art". Incidentally, Dr. Geiringer adds another voice to the chorus of reproach that even to-day hardly one-third of Haydn's music is accessible in print. No other composer worth mentioning suffers from a neglect so disgraceful: though to what address we should direct the chorus of reproach is uncertain.

Mr. L. G. Langwill presents a very learned and exhaustive paper on 'The Bassoon, its Origin and Evolution', with half a dozen illustrations. Dr. E. G. Richardson's paper on 'The Production and Analysis of Tone by Electrical Means' deals with a complex subject with scientific thoroughness; and Mr. Ll. S. Lloyd discusses 'The Place of "Hearing" in Theory and Music' very interestingly, coming to the final conclusion:

The musical premisses of the theoretician were wrong and his scientific argument was wrong. The musician at last comes into his own. To understand musical acoustics we must begin with music.

E. W.

*Studies in Counterpoint Based on the Twelve-Tone Technique.* By Ernst Křenek.  
pp. 37. (Schirmer, New York; Chappell, London, 1940) 5s.

The literature on twelve-note music is, comparatively speaking, still scanty. This is not to be wondered at in view of the fact that it is only within the last fifteen years or so that atonal music has gained firmer ground. Moreover, the circle of musicians who bring an open and unbiased mind to it is still limited; for apart from objections raised against it on purely æsthetic grounds, its singularly abstruse technique presents even to well-trained musicians difficulties of a kind that they have not encountered before in the art of composition. The founder and leader of the atonal school as well as most of his disciples have, except for a few reported statements and scattered articles, not been helpful in enlightening us about their new system and its special technique. No doubt this "esoteric" attitude accounted for a great many misunderstandings and rash judgments on the part of the general musical public.

It is only in the last five years that the veil over the supposed mysteries of twelve-note music has gradually been lifted. I am referring particularly to such excellent writings as Richard Hill's 'Schoenberg's Tone-Rows and the Tonal System of the Future' ('Musical Quarterly', January, 1936), Ernst Křenek's six lectures 'Über neue Musik' (Vienna, 1937),

Willy Reich's 'Alban Berg' (Vienna, 1937) and the same author's article on twelve-note music in the latest edition of 'Grove'. Yet, invaluable as these writings were from the point of view of a theoretical explanation, for the student-composer who wished to draw from them more practical lessons for his own work they were partly too speculative, partly too general. There was, therefore, a need for a textbook setting forth in clear and simple language the elementary principles on which the technique of twelve-note music is based. This has now been done in Křenek's 'Studies in Counterpoint'.

Ever since his 'Über neue Musik' came out one felt that Křenek, combining as he does sound theoretical knowledge and vast practical experience as a composer, was exactly the right man for this kind of job. Besides, he showed himself there a clear and logical thinker who has the knack of writing on such a complex subject with rare lucidity and penetration. In his new book he has turned these qualities to excellent account. That it should be entitled 'Studies in Counterpoint' is only natural, as the very nature of twelve-note music is melodic and thus its technique necessarily a preponderantly contrapuntal one. Křenek introduces these studies with a brief outline of the nature of twelve-note technique, which owes its origin partly to the necessity of finding new methods by which "to create logically coherent forms", as the former methods of achieving this aim in tonal music (harmonic zones and key-relationships) could no longer be applied to this new music; partly to Schoenberg's preoccupation with a unifying thematic idea which should pervade the whole composition both in its horizontal and its vertical aspects. This unifying idea resulted in the invention of the tone-row or tone-series to which Křenek assigns as its primary function that of a "store of motifs".

Křenek begins the practical course with a discussion of the tone-series and goes on to show how a theme is built from it, a process that makes it abundantly clear how in the absence of tonal (harmonic) considerations all the elements of pure melody-building such as choice and distribution of interval, compass, phrasing, accentuation, rhythm and metre, in short everything that goes to the making of a highly articulated melodic line, here attain a far greater importance than they do in tonal music. It is above all the rhythmic imagination which, unfettered by the stereotyped metres of tonal music, here finds an unlimited scope. Next come the chapters on two-part writing and the derivative forms of the original tone-series (inversion, retrograde form of the original and the inversion, respectively), and we learn of some important extensions of the strict rules in the use of the tone-series, such as repetition of the same note in certain circumstances, interruption of the series by interpolation of fragments from other series-forms, its continuation after several beats or bars in another part than the original one, anticipation of a note before it is due to enter according to the basic series, &c. All this has never been stated in such definite form before and illustrated with such instructive examples.

Two-part writing brings up the question of consonant and dissonant intervals, and lo and behold! twelve-note music adheres, at any rate theoretically, to the same distinction as that found in our textbooks on traditional tonal harmony. Even the perfect fourth retains its historical

ambiguous character. The new thing, however, is a table in which the various dissonances are classified according to their degree of harshness: "mild" dissonances (major second, minor seventh, major ninth) and "sharp" dissonances (minor second, major seventh, minor ninth). This scale enables the composer to use the dissonances in an ordered and discriminating manner. The same applies to chords in three-part writing, for with the aid of the above table we are now in a position to establish the varying tension-degree of chords which is dependent on the respective consonant and dissonant nature of their constituent intervals. We thus get a second table that gives us six different and gradually increasing tension-degrees: chords consisting of three consonances; two consonances and one mild dissonance; one consonance and two mild dissonances; two consonances and one sharp dissonance; one consonance, one mild dissonance and one sharp dissonance; and finally one mild and two sharp dissonances. Thus progressions from one group of chords to another will create tension or relaxation according to the position of the chords in that table. With the aid of this classification it is possible to create crescendos and diminuendos of harmonic tension in a controlled and deliberate way, and this device can be used also for formal purposes such as preparation of climaxes and subsequent relief. This classification is perhaps Křenek's most valuable contribution to the controversial question of dissonance-degrees in modern music.

The distinction between mild and sharp intervals and chords further shows that although twelve-note music treats discords like concords (*i.e.* discords require no resolutions), it is all the same subject to the fundamental law of tension and relaxation which governs our whole mental, emotional and physical life. Yet Křenek makes it clear that this distinction must by no means be taken as absolute. He takes into account the modern view of the essentially relative nature of discords, and the consequent state of flux and unstableness in which the modern criteria of dissonance find themselves, when he says that "the decision of what shall be considered a dissonance and how it should be handled is an arbitrary assumption inherent in a particular style, for it depends exclusively on æsthetical concepts" (p. 7), and later that "from this catalogue of chords the student may learn nothing more than certain criteria by which to determine tension-degrees of chords in general. He should bear in mind that in practical composition the tension-degrees are subject to manifold variations, resulting from the position of the intervals, dynamics, instrumentation, &c." (p. 20); and he warns the student against "pedantry in applying in practical composition the distinction of tension-degrees here explained" (p. 21).

One word on the concords. It is true that in theory twelve-note music admits their use, yet in practice this is more or less deprecated for two reasons: first, because the concords create a musical standstill—a debatable point, as according to the theory of beats there is no perfect consonance except the octave and, besides, an interplay of concords and discords will always prevent any such supposed standstill; the second more plausible reason is the tonal implication which the use of concords might suggest—the very last thing twelve-note music desires to do. This would explain the extremely dissonant nature of this music on purely technical grounds.



In the chapter on transpositions of the series and its three derivations the unlimited possibilities are shown which the twelve-note technique offers to the composer's sense of thematic construction. Its great intellectual fascination is undeniable, and one becomes almost giddy on seeing the music example on p. 28 containing all the forty-eight transpositions of a series and its three derivatives, from which the composer is free to make his choice. Twelve-note music is, indeed, the acme of constructivism. In this very fact, however, lies the great danger of using the twelve-note technique as an end itself and of regarding the structural side of atonal music as the ultimate aim. But Křenek is aware of this danger and repeatedly warns the student against it when he stresses the importance of expressive quality, taste, imagination and inspiration which in the last resort should be the guiding factors.

'Studies in Counterpoint' is a first-rate book which ought to be used not only by the student-composer for whom it was primarily written, but by all those who are alive to the various problems of modern music in general. It is true that Křenek shows us only the bare bones of atonal music, but after all anatomy is the foundation of the whole body.

M. C.

*A Study of Twentieth-Century Harmony.* Vol. I: *Harmony in France to 1914.*

By René Lenormand. English Translation by Herbert Antcliffe. 2nd Edition. (Joseph Williams, London, 1940) 6s.

It is a vice of modern theorists to isolate harmonic progressions like so many botanical specimens, and to attempt with these data to tell the story of musical progress. Lenormand did not fall into that error. He asserted:

The harmony called *modern*, considered as a means of technique, does not suffice to constitute a *modern music*. Such compositions, where are to be found gathered together all the new devices, often give only a negative impression. On the other hand, some works based on harmonies relatively simple can invoke an intensely modern atmosphere.

After this one feels one can trust the author. His book is a *catalogue raisonné* of harmonic procedure, but no rules are laid down as to what is "good" or "bad". He simply tells the student what various composers have done. The only drawbacks of the book, which is exceptionally clear and methodical, are first that the examples are almost exclusively chosen from the works of French composers, and secondly that it was first published (in English) in 1915 and though announced on the title-page as a new edition, does not appear to have been revised. The author's attitude to later developments is evident from his admission that he finds Schoenberg's music completely unintelligible. The result is that it is a sort of handbook to French impressionism—and mainly to keyboard music, since that was the field where impressionism won its most notable victories. Its limitations are to be made good, we learn, in a second volume by Mosco Carner, entitled 'A Study of Twentieth-Century Harmony' and dealing presumably with the whole of Europe.

The oddities in Lenormand's book are confined to incidentals. He thinks imitative writing is passing out of use and naïvely gives some very simple examples of it. In general, counterpoint clearly means little to him. What did he think, one wonders, of the post-war outbreak of neo-Bach? He died in 1932 and might easily have added a chapter or

two on these developments. Bar-lines he thinks a great nuisance. It is better to write without them and then fit them in "before the accented parts of their musical discourse". If the result is the sequence 6-8, 9-4, 3-2, 3-4, 5-4, 7-8, which he finds in a work by Koechlin, so much the better. It does not seem to occur to him that there is no reason in the world why bar-lines should coincide with accents and that these constant changes simply create unnecessary difficulties for conductors and orchestral players. Some of the analysis of keyboard progressions seems wilfully academic. What is the use of saying that some odd progression or harmony is "really" something fundamental and simple, with merely a note or two altered and a resolution delayed or left out? A modern chord is not a distortion or embellishment of a familiar triad. It exists in its own right: it is what it is, and it has got to be added to the harmonic spectrum. To suggest that composers like Ravel were really writing like Schumann, only with all sorts of modifications and omissions, so that unessential notes become essential, is extravagant. If the notes are essential, that is that; and one might as well realize that in nine cases out of ten the composer simply discovered them by experiment at the keyboard. We must explain twentieth-century harmony in its own terms or it will soon become meaningless.

J. A. W.

*You and Music.* By Christian Darnton. ("Pelican" Special.) pp. 159. (Penguin Books, Ltd., Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1940) 6d.

The only thing about this book that is small in value is its price. Dividing his survey into two parts the author deals first with the nature of music, how instrumental sounds are produced and the occasions for which music is written. The second part is mainly history, with important chapters at the end dealing with aspects of interpretation, performance, listening and the cleavage between so-called popular and so-called serious music to-day. The concise descriptions of instruments show wide understanding and that nice appreciation of right and wrong which comes from practice not only as composer but as player. Things are usefully recalled to mind, such as the fact that the celesta cannot go out of tune or that harpists never use the little finger. As an example of the efficient manner in which the instruments are described, the three pages devoted to the trumpet should be read. They give all that the ordinary man wants to know and suggest, as the author continually does throughout the book, fruitful lines of research for the more curious-minded. Illuminating, also, as suggesting an attitude and providing a clue, is the fact that a German quotation is translated ("The English never know any language but their own") while a Latin tag is not ("No gentleman's education is complete without some knowledge of Latin").

The book reads well. It has wit and a sardonic humour, each stimulating. In regard to modern music, Mr. Darnton speaks with the authority of a composer. This gives significance to his criticism, some of which is startling. An instance is the assertion that "no composer of international consequence has as yet been thrown up" from the modern English school. Such a judgment must be treated with the respect it deserves as coming from a contemporary English composer. In a book which must needs be compressed into generalized statements this is among the boldest; and because it foreshadows the future of contem-

porary music it is highly susceptible of refutation. The example of Byrd, whose international consequence has become evident only some hundreds of years after his death, tends to show how vulnerable such a statement may be. Nevertheless, nothing venture nothing have, and the very fact that by his boldness the author has made us think hard is but one of the notable qualities of his book.

S. G.

*In Defence of Hanslick.* By Stewart Deas. pp. 114. (Williams & Norgate, London, 1940) 5s.

This is a curious book. Eduard Hanslick was no more important than most music critics. He wrote one book on musical æsthetics, 'Vom Musikalisch-Schönen', which still has some interest and value, and has been translated into several languages (including English), and another, 'Geschichte des Concertwesens in Wien', which is useful to specialists; his other writings hardly matter at all. He was probably no wiser and no more foolish than the majority of his colleagues, but, owing to his anti-Wagnerism, he has come to be generally regarded as a spiteful and ignorant ass, and he has been outrageously abused by a number of people who ought to have known better. These are the essential facts in the Case of Eduard Hanslick.

Here, then, is a minor figure of nineteenth-century musical Vienna to whom considerable injustice has been done, but who would be practically forgotten if he had never suffered this injustice. It is only right that the injustice should be pointed out and it is chivalrous of Mr. Deas to take up arms in his defence. But the chivalry that devotes a whole book, even though a small one, to what is really only matter for an article, is suspiciously like Quixotism. (One sees the publisher in the rôle of honest Sancho.) Nor is disproportion the only weakness of Mr. Deas's essay. It is easy enough to show that Hanslick, like a good many of the other early anti-Wagnerians, had (or discovered) solid æsthetic grounds for their dislike of the "new German school", that that they were not merely giving free play to unfounded spite or prejudice. But Hanslick's critical reputation cannot be reinstated simply by showing that he meant what he said in 'Vom Musikalisch-Schönen' and that there is a good deal of truth in it. Sincerity is a negative virtue in criticism as in art; positively, it amounts to no more than "good intentions", and we all know where they go. As for Hanslick's æsthetic theories, they embody truths—or aspects of the truth—about the "absolute" nature of music which need reaffirmation from time to time, and never needed it more than during the flood-tide of the symphonic poem. ('Vom Musikalisch-Schönen' was published in 1854.) But Hanslick not only rationalized his personal tastes into principles, as every critic must do to some extent; he turned his principles into dogma—which convicts him of narrow-mindedness. Moreover, his exclusive doctrine is largely built on sand: the false, nineteenth-century view of Mozart and his contemporaries held by Jahn and all the other conservatives of the day.

Even so, Mr. Deas might still have made out a good case for Hanslick as an authoritative critic. This is where he fails most surprisingly, for, although he quotes fairly lavishly from Hanslick's writings, he does not produce one scrap of evidence that Hanslick possessed any more insight,

power of illumination, literary skill or scholarship than the average music critic of a third-rate British provincial newspaper of the present day. G. A.

*Music and Edgar Allan Poe : a Bibliographical Study.* By May Garrettson Evans. pp. 97. (John Hopkins Press, Baltimore ; Oxford University Press, 1939) 10s.

The author of this book, which is a compilation with a preface rather than a wholly literary product, explains Poe's far-reaching influence on musicians by what a critic has called "the witchery of his rhymes and the sorcery of his rhythms". These qualities, however, do not alone account for the fact that Miss Evans's list of compositions set to or based on works by Poe reaches a quarter of a thousand. For all who deserve the name of poet have possessed these virtues—some in greater measure, indeed—while another American, Whitman, in whose verse reason vastly predominates over rhyme, who, whatever else he may be, is never bewitching and whose rhythms are not those of music, has also appealed to many composers. The real explanation of Poe's exceptional attraction for musicians is probably his dream-like—sometimes nightmarish—fantasy, for it is a noticeable fact that the catalogue contains a large number of symphonic poems, ballets and instrumental pieces based on the tales as well as of vocal settings of the poems.

On the other hand it is curious to note that the only operas based on a subject by a writer whose own work is often almost operatic in itself are Lazare Saminsky's opera-ballet, 'The Plague's Galliard' and a one-act version of 'The Fall of the House of Usher' by an American amateur composer, Avery Claflin. It may be doubted whether the latter compensates for the loss of the opera on the same tale and that on 'The Devil in the Belfry' which Debussy did not advance beyond the stage of sketches. Franz Schreker, by the way, wrote his own libretto for a one-act opera on 'The Masque of the Red Death', but never composed it. This is also the basis for Saminsky's piece and it has furnished scenarios for ballets by Josef Holbrooke, Owen Reed, Cyril Scott, Nicolai Tcherepnin and Friedrich Wilckens.

The bibliographical and statistical particulars carefully put together by Miss Evans reveal some curious facts. Among the earliest published settings (about 1865) are songs on 'Annabel Lee' and the first stanza of 'The Bells' by no other than the composer of 'The Bohemian Girl'! The most prolific of what Miss Evans, I am afraid, would call "Poe-conscious" composers reveals himself to be Josef Holbrooke. The most numerous settings, as might have been expected, are the thirty-two of 'Annabel Lee'. The literary portion of this book is a useful but not an elegant or very discerning piece of work. E. B.

*Notes on the Literature of the Piano.* By Albert Lockwood. pp. 235. (University of Michigan Press ; Oxford University Press, 1940) 14s.

This amiable compilation, made by a well-known American pianoforte teacher, is, for the small distance it takes the reader, useful as a catalogue of the major pianoforte works. Restricted in scope and generalized in manner, it reflects the writer's mind while leaving the



music with no more illumination than that already brought to bear on it by the reader. The interest of the volume lies precisely there: it is the random jottings of a musician who felt uncomfortable with Beethoven ("this Olympian personage"—"this sturdy peasant-Jupiter"), revered and was slightly chilled by J. S. Bach, admired Liszt for the pianistic efficiency of the writing but was sufficiently clear-sighted to discount the trash (this is the best note-jotting in the book and it alone reaches a fair level of critical judgment).

No scholarship is displayed; nor are the technicalities of pianoforte playing or, fortunately, any method of interpretation discussed. It may be asked what is left. Very little beyond the catalogue and a collection of *obiter dicta*, some amusingly, others annoyingly wrong-headed. Of the former an example, apropos of John Ireland, is: "He is a thoughtful artist who with painstaking slowness composes in an ecstasy chastened by a stern critical mentality". Wrong in another way is the statement that Elgar "started the movement" which was to result in the renaissance of British music. Finally this, in the notes on Domenico Scarlatti: "Like most early music, nearly all the pieces would benefit by some transcribing. *A few notes added or changed* often make a vast tonal difference and do not require much skill, *nor do they change the spirit of the music.*" The italics are mine. In those few notes changed, what a world of pianistic immortality lies revealed! S. G.

*A Choral Psalter.* Edited by G. T. Thalben-Ball. pp. 293. (Williams & Norgate, London, 1940) 9s.

In the great majority of churches in this country it is hardly possible to hear the singing of the Psalms with any feelings more pleasant than acute discomfort. The gibberish produced by the conventional manner of chanting has become such a strong tradition that otherwise intelligent members of a congregation will accept the gabbled articulation, false accent and false quantity without a murmur: so much so that attempts to improve psalm singing commonly meet with opposition from the most unexpected sources.

During the past twenty-five years there has been a deluge of newly published psalters aiming, with varying success, at providing a simple means of giving an intelligent and artistic rendering of the Psalms.

Dr. Thalben-Ball, organist of the Temple Church, having had the opportunity of trying out various psalters and methods of pointing, has produced a 'Choral Psalter' of great interest and value. Finding, no doubt, that all the psalters which based their pointing on the formula of the normal chant were liable, at some time or another, to produce some distortion or ambiguity of meaning in the Psalms, he started at the other end of the problem and altered the shape of the chant.

This method opens up the most fascinating possibilities and at the same time presents some knotty problems. The Anglican chant is a rhythmic pattern, a pattern that singers can feel subconsciously. They think in alternate groups of three and four bars, and this grouping, because of its regularity, becomes practically a reflex action of the mind. Dr. Thalben-Ball, however, uses several different rhythms, e.g. 3-3, 3-4-5, 2-3-3-4, 3-4-3-3, 3-3-3-3-4, &c., and, having done so, chooses the most suitable one for each Psalm. This demands the varied pointings

for the Gloria which are found at the end of the book and accounts for directions at the conclusion of each Psalm, such as "Gloria Patri F" or "Gloria Patria B (or 6a)" or the somewhat bewildering "Gloria Patria B (4th part of chant as v. 144) (or 1)."

A well-trained choir will find little difficulty in the method and should revel in its refreshing variety. In churches where the congregation expects to be able to join in the singing of the Psalms, that is, the majority of parish churches, this psalter presents some doubts of its practicability. Varied phrase-lengths in the chants, continual change of chant and congregational complacency join together to form a serious problem. Again it is necessary for every person wishing to sing to have a copy of this somewhat highly priced book.

The rather fidgety plan of changing chant on every possible occasion is a common procedure nowadays and one that makes for restlessness and the destruction of the very atmosphere it is hoped to produce. Here, in Psalm 106, we have three chants, each with a different rhythm, bandied about almost from verse to verse: eleven changes in forty-six verses. The untrained singer loses the inspiration of the words in his anxiety over the technique of performance.

The chants printed in the psalter are rhythmic adaptations of familiar tunes, some most excellent original chants as well as a good number of well-known ones. The choice is an excellent illustration of the best qualities needed in a chant book. Nowhere do we find the mawkish, pretty partsong horrors that have defaced so many chant books.

W. G.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

- Franz Schubert and his Merry Friends.* By Opal Wheeler and Sybil Deucher. Illustrated by Mary Greenwalt. pp. 124. (Faber, London, 1940) 6s.
- Manifold Unity: the Ancient World's Perception of the Divine Pattern of Harmony and Compassion.* By Collum. ('Wisdom of the East' series) pp. 115. (Murray, London, 1940) 3s. 6d.
- Poems.* By H. P. Dixon. pp. 85. (Oxford University Press, 1940) 5s.
- The Listener's History of Music.* By Percy A. Scholes. Vol. III: *To the Composers of To-day.* Second Edition. pp. 165. (Oxford University Press, 1939) 6s.

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Chopin, *Étude in F Minor (Trois Nouvelles Études)*. Authentic Text, published by Arthur Hedley. (75 Fursecroft, George Street, London, W. 1).

It has been obvious from the first that the Édouard Ganche edition of Chopin's works, which claims to be the only one based on the original editions and manuscripts, though immensely interesting to scholars, is of more than doubtful value to performers. Such early sources, extremely useful as they are, can also be dangerously misleading. In the case of Chopin they are too often unreliable because he himself altered or corrected manuscripts or first editions when they reached the stage of publication or reissue, without troubling or being able to mark these changes in the early sources. M. Ganche is, of course, right in asserting that later editors have often taken too much upon themselves, but an authentic reading is not to be sought in the manuscripts and first editions, but in the last editions Chopin himself had the opportunity to revise.

The F minor Study (without opus number), the first of the three Chopin contributed to Moscheles and Fétis's 'Méthode des Méthodes des Pianistes', exposes M. Ganche's error particularly clearly, and Mr. Hedley, who has done valuable work in Chopin research, now follows up the dispute he had with M. Ganche in 'The Musical Times' last year by the publication of this Study in strict accordance with the original manuscript, which is in his possession. This, Mr. Hedley states, was never seen by M. Ganche, who admits that in this case he merely followed a lithograph published in 1888, a very imperfect piece of work, according to Mr. Hedley.

This publication clearly has no other object than that of establishing the truth. Although Mr. Hedley is bound to say that M. Ganche did not know the manuscript, he does not therefore suggest that the Ganche edition is wrong for not having been based on it, merely because Mr. Hedley happens to be its proud owner. On the contrary, we are shown that the manuscript is obviously faulty and that the alterations made in it by Moscheles and Fétis for the 'Méthode des Méthodes', which appeared well in Chopin's lifetime (1840), are quite evidently justified and must have been made with the composer's consent, if not indeed by himself in the proofs. Mr. Hedley has done good service in showing that editors should not regard manuscripts as adducing incontrovertible evidence of a composer's considered intentions. But he goes too far in accusing M. Ganche of having deliberately altered the place of an accidental: all that this editor was guilty of here was that he followed Moscheles and Fétis after all in this particular.

E. B.

Cooke, Arnold, *Sonata* for Violin and Piano ; *Sonata* for Viola and Piano. (Oxford University Press) 8s. 6d. each.

Two serious, well-conceived works that merit attention from all violinists and violists interested in music of a modern idiom. But I cannot give unreserved praise to music so dependent upon pattern-making (an impulse that seems in this case to be generated by the faculty of sight) and so lacking in really vital melodic writing. The music is certainly economical, but it is an economy achieved by drying out emotion. The residue interests the mind, but touches no deeper layers. E. R.

Delius, Frederick, *Intermezzo and Serenade from 'Hassan.'* Arranged by Sir Thomas Beecham. (Hawkes, London.) Full Score, 3s. Parts, 4s. Extra Parts, 6d. each. Piano Conductor, 1s.

'*The Walk to the Paradise Garden*': *Intermezzo from 'A Village Romeo and Juliet'*. Arranged by Sir Thomas Beecham. (Hawkes, London.) Full Score, 6s. Parts, 7s. 6d. Extra Parts, 8d. each. Piano Conductor, 1s. 6d.

How far the term "arranged", rather than "edited", applies to Sir Thomas Beecham's share in the publication of the first of these extracts it is difficult to decide, the full score of the incidental music to Flecker's 'Hassan' never having been published. The lay-out of the *Intermezzo* for small orchestra with single woodwind and of the *Serenade* for strings and harp appears to be original. On the other hand it is certain that 'The Walk to the Paradise Garden', extravagantly scored by the composer with triple woodwind and six horns, has been reduced for a more normal orchestra, and since it is one of the most exquisite orchestral pieces ever written, lost in an unfortunately neglected opera as well as made inaccessible by the original orchestration, one can only be grateful for its issue in this new form. That Sir Thomas Beecham must also have acted as editor up to a point may no doubt be taken for granted, for it has been justly said that unless his performances can be made permanently available for study by recording or publication the authentic manner of playing Delius will be lost to posterity. For Delius's scores do not fully reveal his intentions. They are, in a sense, perishable, as Reynolds's pictures are said to be because he was careless about his pigments. Delius was anything but indifferent in his intentions, but the characteristic fluidity of his music was excessively difficult to indicate by means of musical notation. E. B.

Field, John, *Sonata in C minor*, Op. 1, No. 3, for Piano. (Augener, London.) 3s.

This work is reprinted, apparently with little editing, from a copy in the library of the Royal College of Music, and it was sufficiently well worth bringing to light again to make one wonder whether the rest of Field's Op. 1 would not have successfully withstood the scrutiny of the enlightened musical world of to-day, not to mention other forgotten music of his. True, this C minor Sonata is not without clumsiness in construction—the rondo meanders strangely without ever getting anywhere in particular—but it has more than the interest and charm of an old fashion-plate and shows a remarkable resourcefulness in the use of pianistic devices on the part of a youth, even if one remembers that he was



engaged to show off keyboard instruments in Clementi's London showrooms by means of improvisation. Much of the music is, indeed, improvisatory (see for instance the rather helpless "what-do-I-do-next" opening of the first-movement working-out section). Field—but one must go on remembering that here is a very young composer—is inferior in structural ability to both Clementi and Dussek (that working-out is so long and, one even feels, so interesting simply because the composer does not know how to make effective short cuts); but he is not less individual and technically enterprising, and since we have Beethoven to represent the period for grandeur of construction, a sonata by Field is very acceptable as a good example of the work by one of his minor contemporaries who, if he does not stand for great music, at any rate shows us pleasantly what the musical fashions were like in the days when the pianoforte assumed responsibilities and extravagances of its own.

E. B.

Gurney, Ivor, *Two Pieces for Violin and Piano: The Apple Orchard; Scherzo*. (Oxford University Press) 2s. 6d. each.

Two charmingly lyrical miniatures. Art is more apparent in the 'Scherzo'—this is, indeed, the better, at any rate, more interesting, piece of the two—but the first more clearly shows the finely lyrical type of Gurney's mind. Violinists should welcome these two pieces, for good miniatures are rare.

E. R.

Holst, Gustav, *First Suite, in E flat*. Transcribed for Orchestra by Gordon Jacob. (Hawkes, London.) Full Score, 15s. Parts (full orchestra), 10s; (small orchestra), 7s. 6d. Extra Parts, 10d. each. Piano Conductor, 2s.

Holst was among the distinguished composers who were asked to write important works especially for the brass band competitions at the Crystal Palace, and he afterwards became interested in the fuller if less beautifully homogeneous medium of the military band as well. This work is the outcome of his desire, shared with Vaughan Williams and others, to build up a more worthy repertory of military-band music, which had consisted almost exclusively of arrangements. Whether he would have approved of having this Suite arranged in turn for orchestra nobody can tell, but Gordon Jacob, though he would doubtless prefer it to be said by somebody else that his transcription is extremely well done, might justly plead that Holst was always in favour of making his music as widely accessible as possible by means of cueing or transcription.

The work is very attractive. Although it shares with most of Holst's music certain evidences of his pleasure in experiment for its own sake (in this case not only the use of a medium with which serious composers are not usually familiar, but also that of a fundamental phrase on which each movement—a Chaconne, an Intermezzo and a March—is built), it shows throughout the freshness of a fertile and original inventiveness.

E. B.

Murrill, Herbert, *String Quartet*. (Oxford University Press) Score 6s. 6d.; Parts 10s. 6d.

What a pity the composer thought fit to end this otherwise fine work

with a movement that apes a "smartness" now entirely past. One can understand the mood that dictated it, but not the artistic conscience that could let it pass. But the sturdy muscularity of the other three movements—albeit the material is rather undefined—is ample compensation. The writing for the medium is everywhere excellent and, unlike most modern quartets, the work is not difficult to perform.

E. R.

*Oxford Liturgical Settings of the Holy Communion.* Edited by J. H. Arnold.

No. IV, by William Byrd (Drawn from the Latin Litany and from an independent English Sanctus) (Oxford University Press) 8d.

This setting should be in wide use. Its dignity and restraint should recommend it to all those who are tired of the sentimental musings of Victorian organists. I cannot praise Mr. Arnold's editing more than by saying that his accompaniments to the Creed, Agnus Dei and Gloria are in exact keeping with the simple and expressive vocal lines.

E. R.

Peterkin, Norman, *The Bees' Song* (Walter de la Mare); *Sleep, White Love* (Seosamh MacCathmhaoil); for Voice and Piano. (Oxford University Press) 2s. each.

It is good to see more songs from this composer's pen, and also to see that his harmonic imagery still retains its sensitive delicacy. 'The Bees' Song' is the better and more interesting of the two (the words give the singer some interesting consonantal problems), perhaps because the twilit harmonies are less consciously "Celtic". The enjoyment of these songs will be equally shared by singer and accompanist.

E. R.

Roseingrave, Thomas, *Fifteen Voluntaries and Fugues for the Organ.* Edited by A. V. Butcher. (Hinrichsen, London) 4s. 6d.

Unless I am confronted by better examples of Roseingrave's gifts I am not likely to become a Roseingrave "fan". Not only do the basic ideas lack distinction, but I am strongly of the conviction that the awkwardnesses, like those found in Gesualdo, are not planned consciously, but are merely the result of a technical lack. By the way, my ear must be singularly obtuse, for I failed to find any of the "grinding, grating discords" mentioned in the editor's foreword, or of "barbarous" and "intolerably harsh" harmonies.

E. R.

Vaughan Williams, R., *Five Variants of 'Dives and Lazarus'*, for String Orchestra and Harp. (Oxford University Press) Full Score, 5s.

A perfect little work, full of characteristically rich diatonic sonorities. Indeed, sonority has been the chief aim here, for the nineteen pages of score contain very few excursions away from homely triads or the prevailing key of B minor. It is this fact that shows the composer's mastery, for there is no feeling of monotony. The work is simple to perform, but requires a large body of strings for its full effect.

E. R.

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Vol. XXVI. No. 4. CONTENTS: OCTOBER 1940

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ELNA SHERMAN (*Lincoln, R.I.*)

IMPONDERABLE ELEMENTS OF MUSICALITY  
MARGIT VARRÓ (*Chicago*)

WILLIAM WALTON  
HUBERT J. FOSS (*London*)

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HERMANN SCHERCHEN (*Neuchâtel, Switzerland*)

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CHARLES SEEGER (*Washington, D.C.*)

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ROSEMARY S. M. HUGHES (*London*)

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HIGINI ANGLES (*Barcelona*)

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